CHAPTER 93
REVELATION

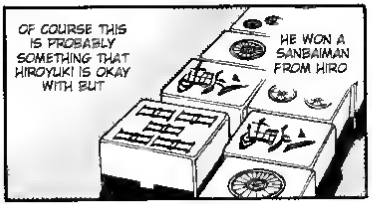
THERE WAS A SANBAIMAN!
SANBAIMAN!
IT WAS A CRAZY OPENING ROUND.
WHAT HAPPENED?
HUH..?
THIS IS TERRIBLE!

ざわ…
ざわ…
HEY, FELLA
EAST CAMP: KANAMITSU

WOHOO!
TEN WON IT.....
IT WAS A DIRECT HIT.
WAS IT TSUMO ...?
THAT SANBAIMAN
NO
MHMM.
HEY PRIEST, WE DID IT !
HIROYUKI FROM EAST WAS THE ONE WHO DEALT IN
BUT
THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING...! LET'S GO...!
COME ON...!
MHMM...
PRIEST...!
UH...
WHAT D'YOU MEAN BY THAT...?
HIRO...
WELL...
WHAT DO I MEAN...?

ざわ…
ざわ…

HIRO HAS 1000 POINTS LEFT
NOW THAT HE'S WON

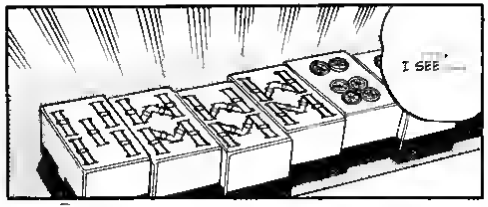

OF COURSE THIS IS PROBABLY SOMETHING THAT HIROYUKI IS OKAY WITH BUT
HE WON A SANBAIMAN FROM HIRO

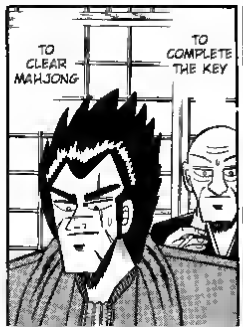
EAST COULD HAVE COMPLETED SAN-AN-KOU.

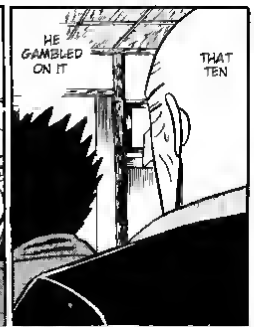
I'M SURE THAT IF THEY DID A GOOD JOB OF AVOIDING THAT DIFFICULT SPOT

IT'S SO CARELESS

STANDING ON THE BRINK OF DESTRUCTION


I SEE


TO CLEAR MAHJONG
TO COMPLETE THE KEY


HE GAMBLED ON IT
THAT TEN

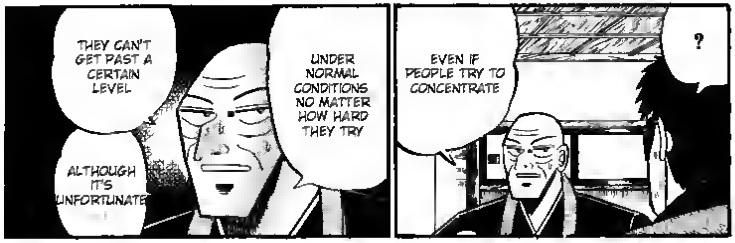
IT'S NOT WORTH IT.
WHATEVER WAY YOU LOOK AT IT
SO WHY'D THEY DO SOMETHING OUTRAGEOUS LIKE THIS...
THIS IS SERIOUS TROUBLE.
BUT LOOK AT WHAT'S HAPPENED FOR THAT.
HIRO COULD GO BELOW ZERO WITH THE NEXT NO-TEN PENALTY.
THEY'RE ONE STEP AHEAD OF WEST.
BUT.....

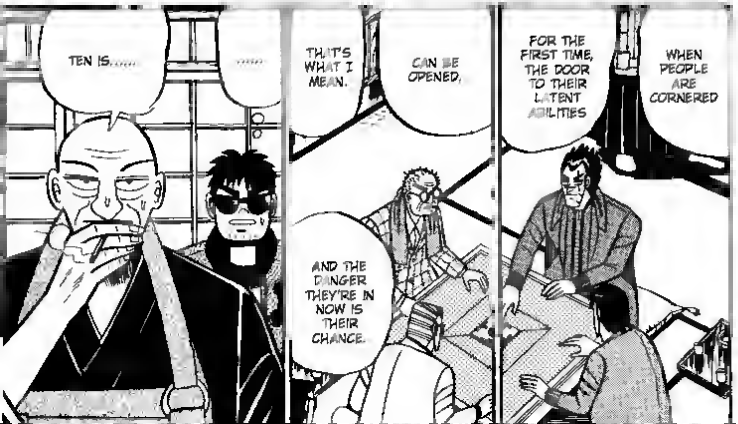
IF YOU'RE ONLY LOOKING RIGHT IN FRONT OF YOU, SURE.....
IT'S AN UNTHINKABLE WAY OF PLAYING

KNOWING FULL WELL ALL OF WHAT YOU SAID SINCE IT'S COMMON SENSE
DARED
PERHAPS
TEN..
HUH..?

YEAH
"WILL"..?
IS WHAT HE MAY HAVE BUILT UP IN ADVANCE.
TO GO BEYOND THAT COMMON SENSE — A SORT OF— "CONCENTRATION" OR "WILL" TOWARDS THE GAME

UNCLOUDED, IT'S POSSIBLE FOR THEM TO EXERCISE A MIRACULOUS STRENGTH
AND IN THAT CASE, THERE'S NOTHING CLOUDING THEIR FEELINGS
A DANGER THEY WELCOMED
IN SHORT, BOTH OF THEM REALIZED THE DANGER
TEN CAN'T HAVE CHOSEN TO FORCE THAT SANBAIMAN
HIRO PROBABLY PLAYED INTO IT


THEY CAN'T GET PAST A CERTAIN LEVEL
ALTHOUGH IT'S UNFORTUNATE
UNDER NORMAL CONDITIONS NO MATTER HOW HARD THEY TRY
EVEN IF PEOPLE TRY TO CONCENTRATE
?


TEN IS.....
.....
THAT'S WHAT I MEAN.
CAN BE OPENED.
AND THE DANGER THEY'RE IN NOW IS THEIR CHANCE.
FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE DOOR TO THEIR LATENT ABILITIES
WHEN PEOPLE ARE CORNERED

IN OTHER WORDS...
DARING TO BET ON THAT DOOR TO THE UNKNOWN!

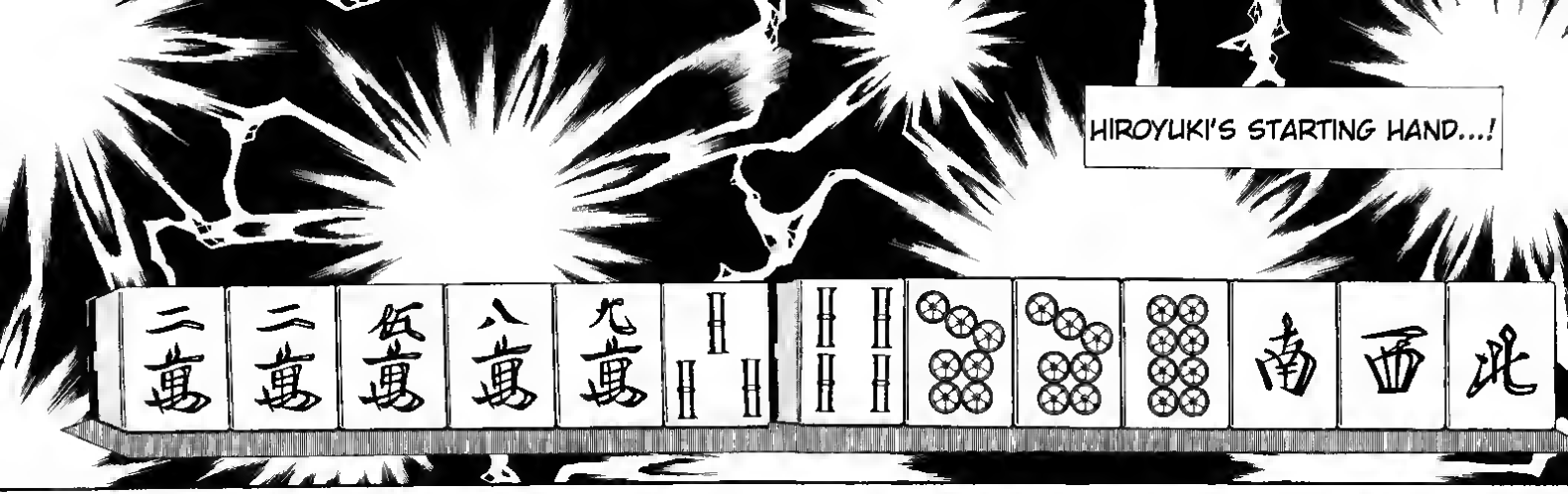
A CHANCE TO BRING THEM CRASHING DOWN
FOR WEST, IT'S MERELY A CHANCE
BUT...
FROM EAST'S POINT OF VIEW, IS THE SAME AS HANGING FROM THE CLIFF OF THE FINAL ROUND
THIS EAST 2ND ROUND

THE DIFFERENCE IN PSYCHOLOGY BETWEEN EAST AND WEST IS HUGE.
THEY DON'T REALLY HAVE TO SETTLE THINGS THIS ROUND
THEY'VE STILL GOT SOME LOOSENESS IN THEIR GAME
THEY'RE NOT IN A PINCH.
TEN...
WITH THAT DIFFERENCE
THE LEVEL OF DESPERATION IS DIFFERENT TOO
AND

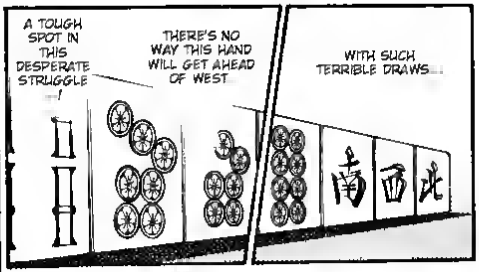
THAT'S TOTALLY OCCULT THINKING...!
THAT'S CRAZY...!
UNSCIENTIFIC
HAS PLANNED OUT HOW TO WIN THE NEXT ROUND...!

WHAT ARE THEY GOING TO DO IF HIRO'S STARTING HAND IS TRASH...?
STARTING HAND...
LIKE
THERE'S THINGS IN MAHJONG THAT YOU CAN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT
EVEN IF THEY'RE MENTALLY FOCUSED

EAST 2ND ROUND
EAST CAMP'S FATE WAS SET
MORE THAN JUST HIRO GETTING TO TENPAI - IF THEY TSUMO FASTER, THAT'S THE END
A TSUMO FROM WEST IS ENOUGH TO MAKE HIRO GO BELOW ZERO
JUST LIKE THAT
LIKE KEN SAID
YOU SAY THAT MENTAL STRENGTH PROMISES A GOOD STARTING HAND...!
EVEN IF


HIROYUKI'S STARTING HAND...!

HIS FIRST TILE: NAN ...!


A TOUGH SPOT IN THIS DESPERATE STRUGGLE...!
THERE'S NO WAY THIS HAND WILL GET AHEAD OF WEST
WITH SUCH TERRIBLE DRAWS...

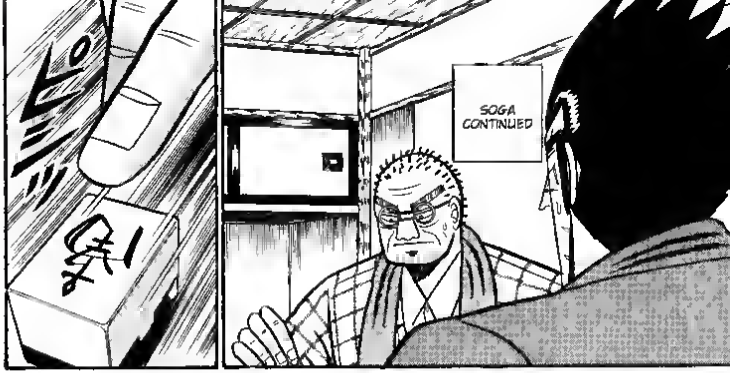
TEN WAS THE DEALER THIS TIME
WHAT ARE THEY GOING TO DO?
SHIT

.....
.....

IT'S NO GOOD

IT'S JUST WHAT I WAS AFRAID WOULD HAPPEN...!

.....

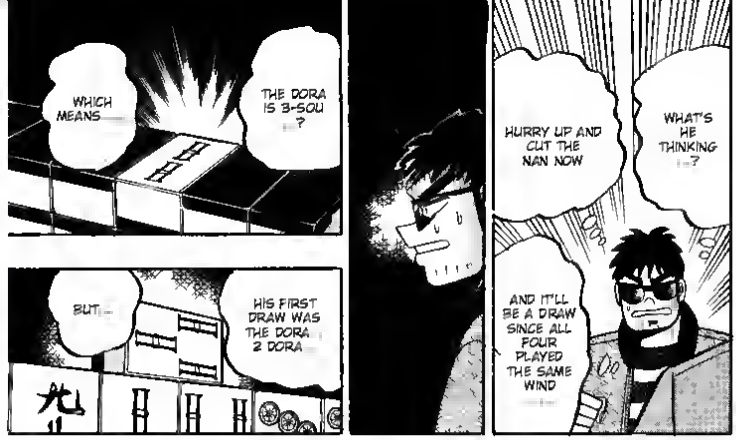

SOGA CONTINUED

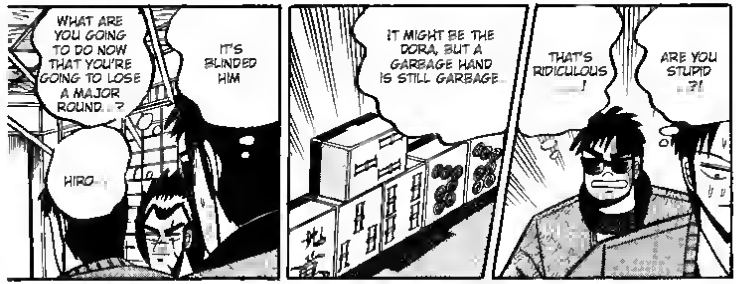
AND THEN HARADA

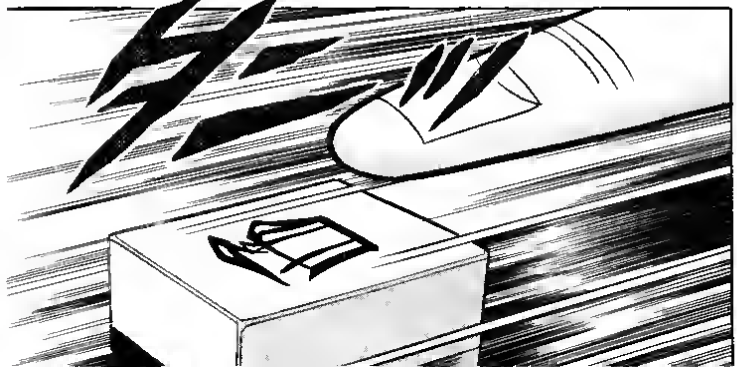
HUH

THREE NAN IN A ROW ...!?
URGH ...!
HE'S SAVED ...!
HIRO HAS A NAN.
IT CAN JUST BE A DRAW...
HE'S GOT GOOD LUCK ...!
HE'S BEEN...
BLESSED .....!

HIRO DIDN'T MOVE!
HUH?
BUT


WHICH MEANS...
THE DORA IS 3-SOU...?
BUT...
HIS FIRST DRAW WAS THE DORA 2 DORA...
HURRY UP AND CUT THE NAN NOW
WHAT'S HE THINKING...?
AND IT'LL BE A DRAW SINCE ALL FOUR PLAYED THE SAME WIND...


WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO NOW THAT YOU'RE GOING TO LOSE A MAJOR ROUND...?
HIRO...
IT'S BLINDED HIM
IT MIGHT BE THE DORA, BUT A GARBAGE HAND IS STILL GARBAGE
THAT'S RIDICULOUS!
ARE YOU STUPID...?!



GH...!
Young Hearts co
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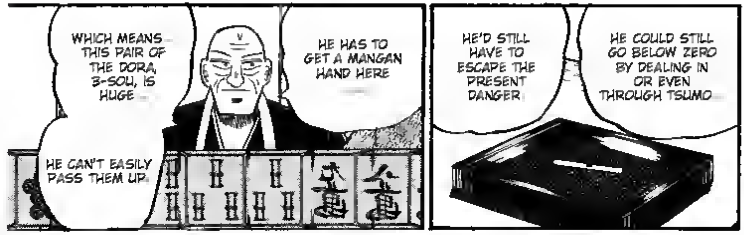
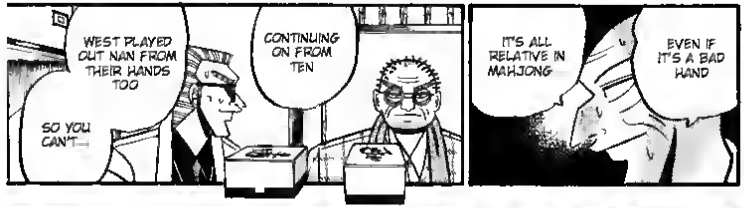
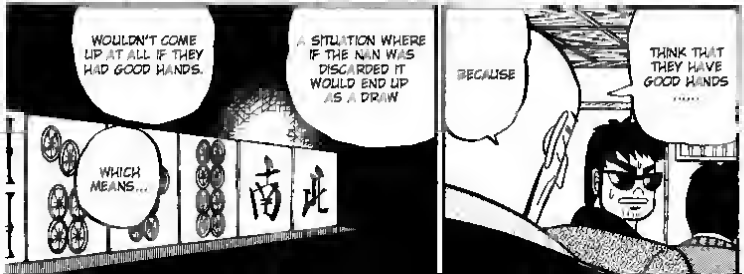
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
HE PLAYED THE SHA ...!?
WHY IS HE STILL GOING WITH THAT GARBAGE HAND...?
IT'S CRAZY ...!

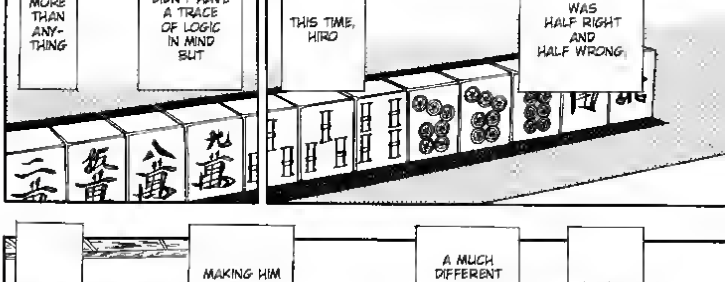
WINNING 1000 OR 2000 POINTS WOULD BE ROUGH
JUST WINNING ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH
NO...
WHEN HE CAN'T WIN
ボソッ
THIS... NO MATTER WHAT...
EVEN WITH TWO DORA


WHICH MEANS THIS PAIR OF THE DORA, 3-SOU, IS HUGE...
HE HAS TO GET A MANGAN HAND HERE
HE CAN'T EASILY PASS THEM UP.
HE'D STILL HAVE TO ESCAPE THE PRESENT DANGER.
HE COULD STILL GO BELOW ZERO BY DEALING IN OR EVEN THROUGH TSUMO...


WEST PLAYED OUT NAN FROM THEIR HANDS TOO
SO YOU CAN'T...
CONTINUING ON FROM TEN
IT'S ALL RELATIVE IN MAHJONG
EVEN IF IT'S A BAD HAND

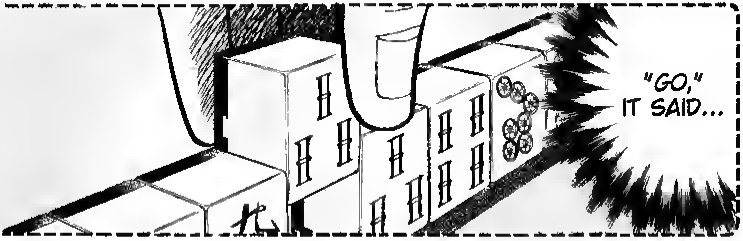

WOULDN'T COME UP AT ALL IF THEY HAD GOOD HANDS.
WHICH MEANS...
A SITUATION WHERE IF THE NAN WAS DISCARDED IT WOULD END UP AS A DRAW
BECAUSE
THINK THAT THEY HAVE GOOD HANDS .....

EVERYONE'S HANDS WILL BE SLOW, AND THE GAME WILL GO THROUGH UNTIL NEAR THE END
THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE OF THAT
AND IF SO... HE HAS A CHANCE
HIRO MAY HAVE DECIDED ON THAT...
HUUUH...
THIS LOGIC OF KANA-MITSU'S

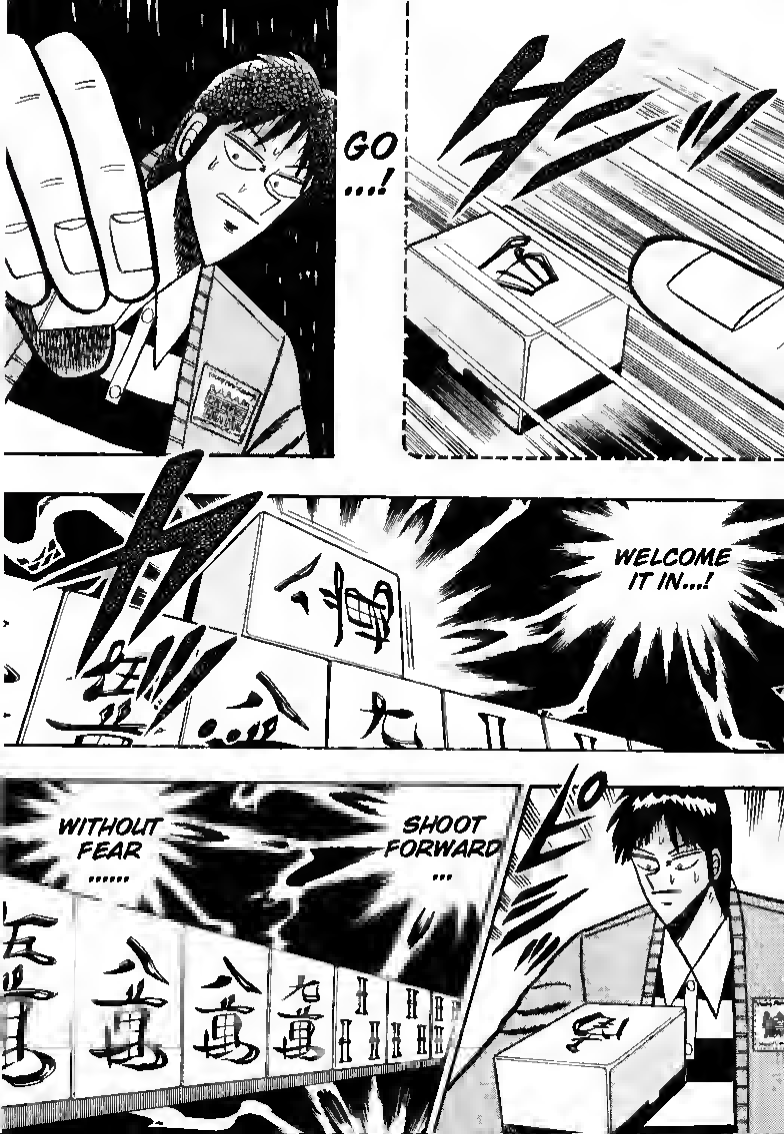

WAS HALF RIGHT AND HALF WRONG
THIS TIME, HIRO
DIDN'T HAVE A TRACE OF LOGIC IN MIND BUT
MORE THAN ANY-THING

IT WAS AS IF
A MUCH DIFFERENT SENSE WAS PUSHING HIM ON FROM BEHIND
MAKING HIM DETERMINED TO CONTINUE THE ROUND
HIRO...

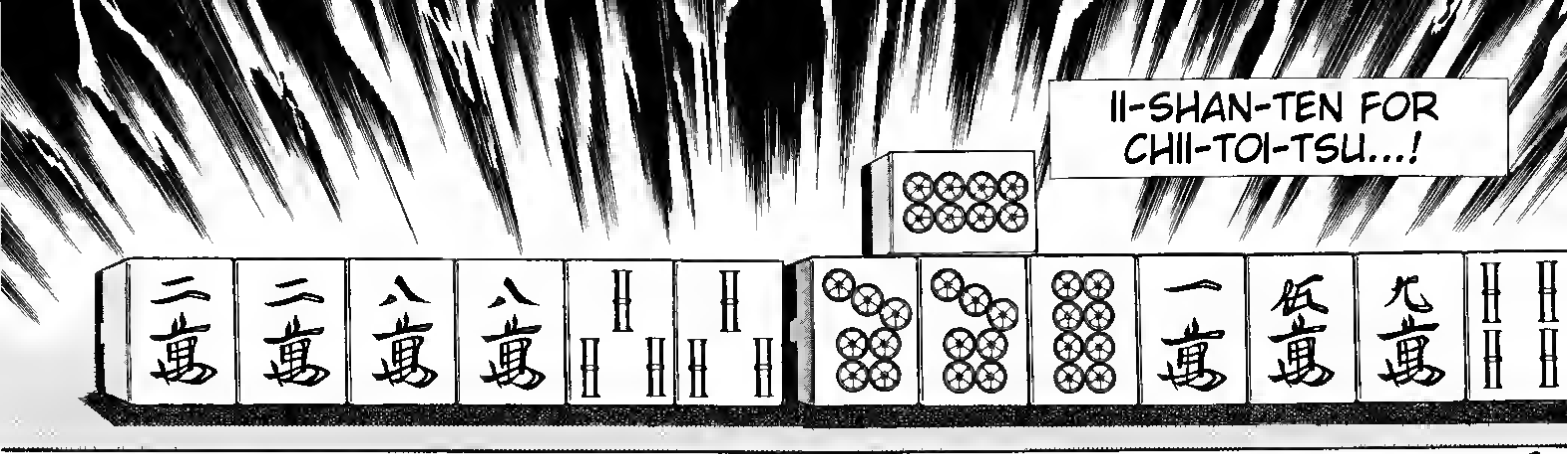
HE FELT A VOICE
IN HIS HEART
THE INSTANT HIS FIRST DRAW WAS ANOTHER DORA

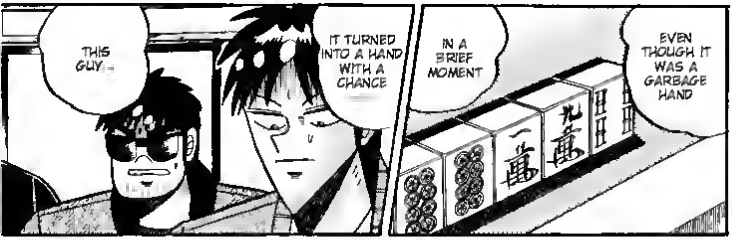

"GO," IT SAID...

HERALDING THE START OF THE ROUND
A REVELATION FROM SOMEONE
THIS B-SOU WAS


GO ...!
WELCOME IT IN...!
WITHOUT FEAR .....
SHOOT FORWARD ...

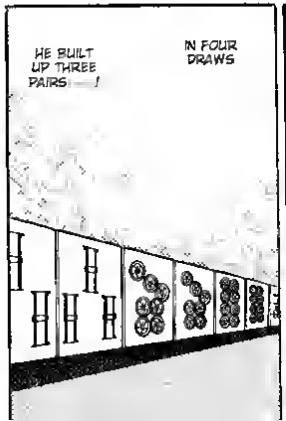
FORWARD
...!
4TH TURN, HIRO
.....
.....
.....
ナ!!!


II-SHAN-TEN FOR CHII-TOI-TSU...!


THIS GUY...
IT TURNED INTO A HAND WITH A CHANCE
IN A BRIEF MOMENT
EVEN THOUGH IT WAS A GARBAGE HAND

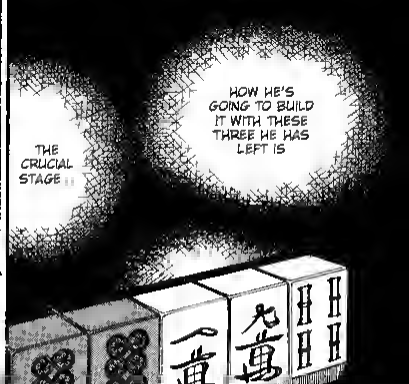
THE HARD PART FOR CHII-TOI-TSU IS COMING UP...!
BUT
IT'S SCARY
I DON'T KNOW HOW, BUT HE'S GETTING THERE
IF SO
HAS HE GOT THE FEEL OF THE FLOW RIGHT NOW...?

GH...
OOO

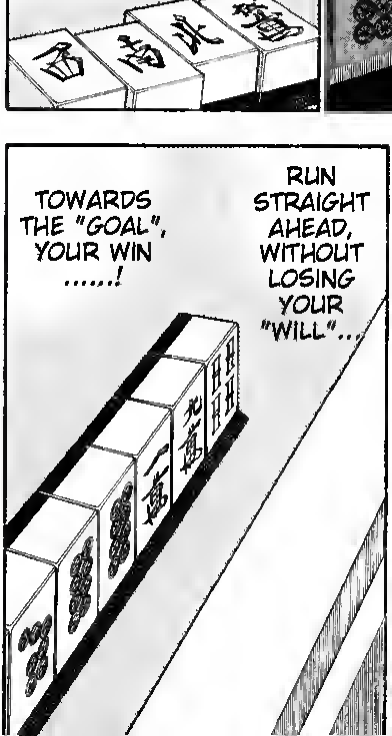

HE BUILT UP THREE PAIRS...!
IN FOUR DRAWS

THAT HIRO...

MISSING A PAIR WILL BE AN UNFORGIVABLE MISTAKE.
IN THIS DESPERATE SITUATION

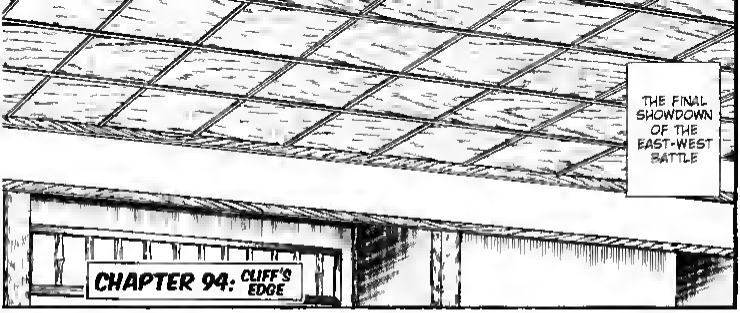

THE CRUCIAL STAGE!!
HOW HE'S GOING TO BUILD IT WITH THESE THREE HE HAS LEFT IS

AND WITHOUT MISTAKES
HE HAS TO DO IT NEATLY, WITHOUT ANY MISTAKES


TOWARDS THE "GOAL", YOUR WIN .....!
RUN STRAIGHT AHEAD, WITHOUT LOSING YOUR "WILL"...

HE MIGHT BE ABLE TO GET THIS ROUND UNDER CONTROL
FASTER THAN ANYONE

BUT IF YOU'VE GOTTEN THIS FAR.....
IT'S A TOUGH SPOT, HIRO...


THE FINAL SHOWDOWN OF THE EAST-WEST BATTLE
CHAPTER 94: CLIFF'S EDGE

HIRO DEALT INTO TEN'S SANBAIMAN HAND ON PURPOSE.
SO THAT EAST CAMP COULD COMPLETE THEIR SAN-AN-KOU
EAST 1ST ROUND OF THIS FINAL BATTLE
ONE THAT WOULD DETERMINE WHETHER EAST OR WEST WOULD COME OUT ON TOP.

HE WAS QUICKLY STANDING AT THE EDGE OF A CLIFF ...!
WITH A MERE 1000 POINTS LEFT
IN THE OPENING ROUND, BY EAST 2ND

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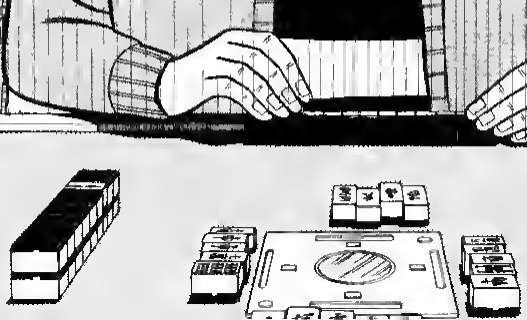
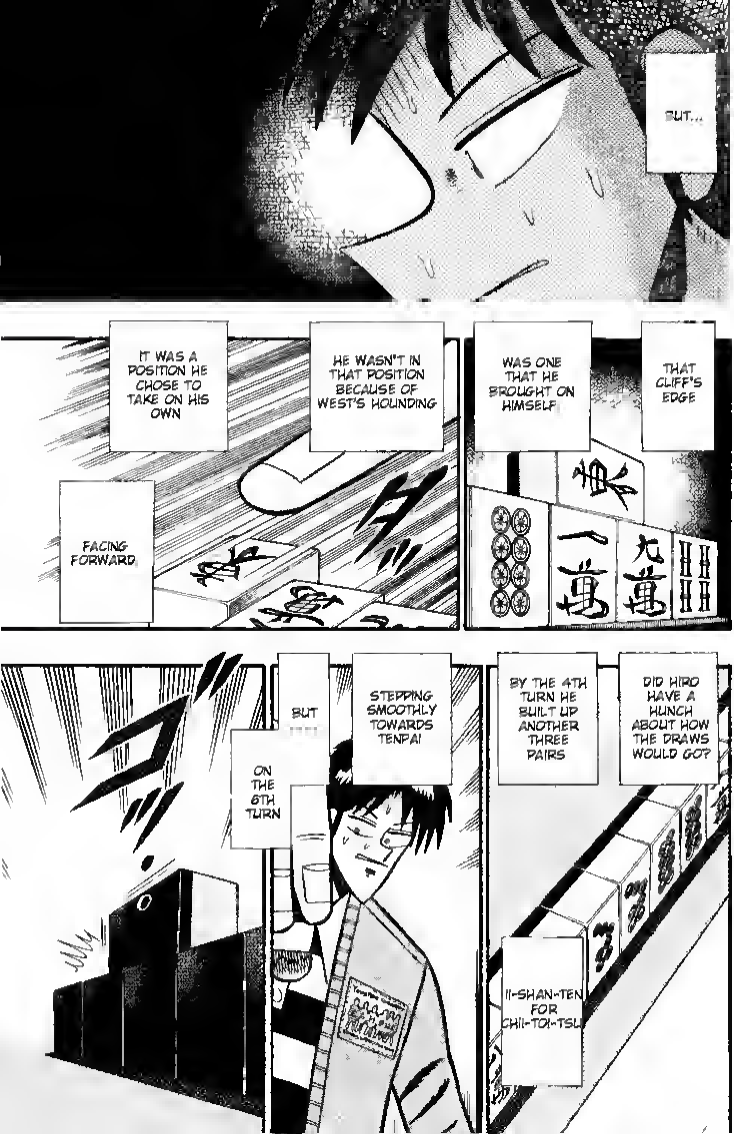
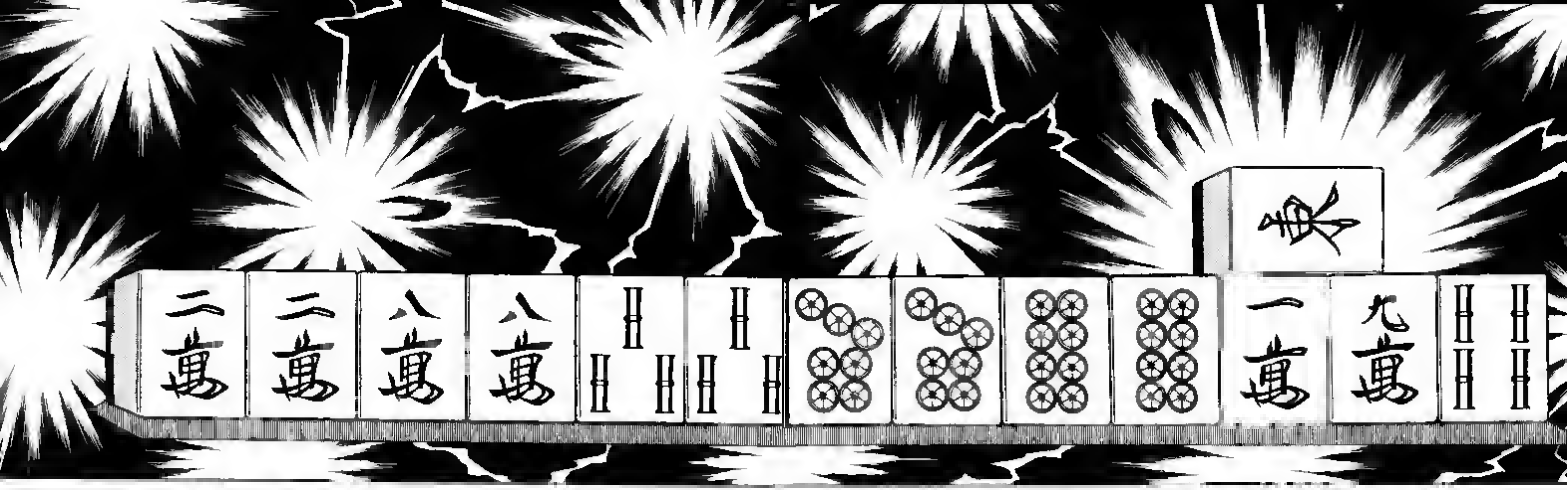
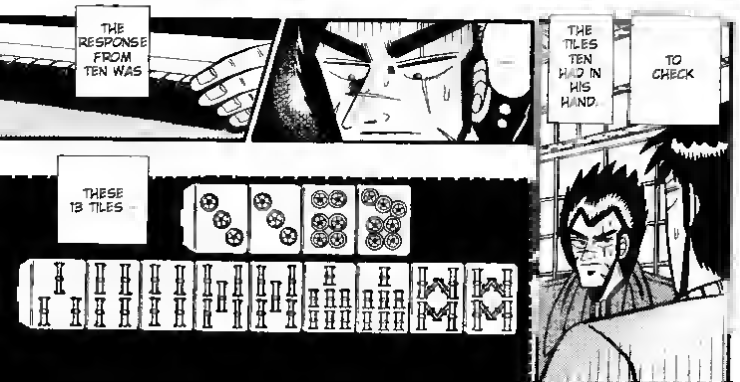
CHAPTER 94
CLIFF'S EDGE



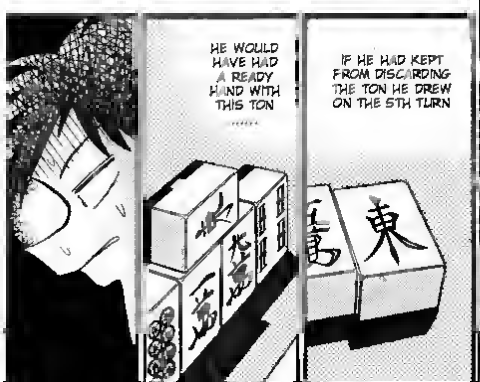

BUT...
IT WAS A POSITION HE CHOSE TO TAKE ON HIS OWN
HE WASN'T IN THAT POSITION BECAUSE OF WEST'S HOUNDING
FACING FORWARD
WAS ONE THAT HE BROUGHT ON HIMSELF
THAT CLIFF'S EDGE
BUT.....
ON THE 6TH TURN
STEPPING SMOOTHLY TOWARDS TENPAI
BY THE 4TH TURN HE BUILT UP ANOTHER THREE PAIRS
DID HIRO HAVE A HUNCH ABOUT HOW THE DRAWS WOULD GO?
II-SHAN-TEN FOR CHII-TOI-TSU



TO SEND SIGNALS TO TEN THIS ROUND
THIS WAS WHEN HIROYUKI BEGAN
チラ!!


THE RESPONSE FROM TEN WAS
THESE 13 TILES
THE TILES TEN HAD IN HIS HAND.
TO CHECK

THE FIRST MISSED PAIR...!


HE WOULD HAVE HAD A READY HAND WITH THIS TON
IF HE HAD KEPT FROM DISCARDING THE TON HE DREW ON THE 5TH TURN

TEN'S HAND
THIS TIME
THEN
九萬
TWO OF THE 4-SOU
FOR AN INSTANT, HIRO HAD AN UNEASY FEELING
RUN THROUGH HIM.
BUT HE COULDN'T PUT HIS FINGER ON WHAT WAS THAT FAINT DISCOMFORT WAS, SO
HIROYUKI IGNORED IT.
RIGHT AFTER

IT BACKFIRED ON HIM ...!
HE MISSED A SECOND PAIR...!
GH.
IS IT A FATAL INJURY ...?
THIS...
ON THE FIELD OF BATTLE...
WHAT A MISTAKE TO MAKE

AFTER THAT TOO
.....
.....
ダニ…
...SHIT
....

WAS NOW ENTIRELY GONE
THE FAVORABLE FLOW OF DRAWS
BAD DRAWS ONE AFTER ANOTHER
HIRO COULDN'T DRAW USEFUL TILES

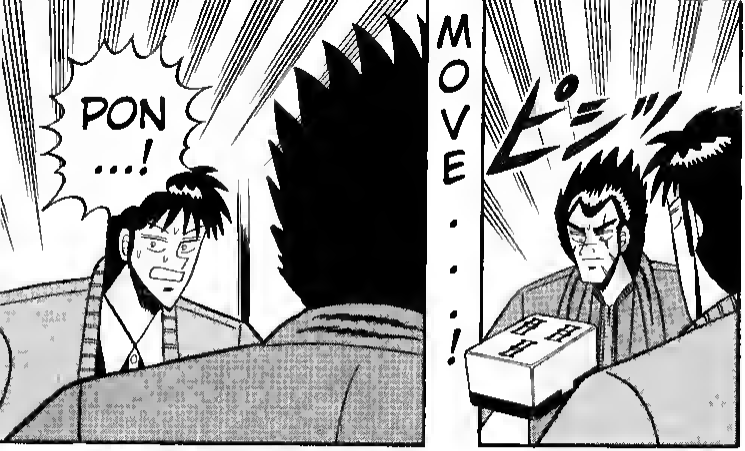
AT THAT TIME ...
ALL I CAN GET ARE USELESS DRAWS...
IT'S NO GOOD...
GETTING HIS SENSE FOR THEM BACK WAS IMPOSSIBLE
SHIT...

IT SUDDENLY APPEARED...
HUH..?
OR CALL AND TURN TOWARDS TAN-YAO...?
STAY WITH CHII-TOI-TSU...?
AT THAT DECISIVE CROSSROAD
A CROSS-ROADS...!
HE MADE A CHOICE...!

WITHOUT NEEDING TO THINK
CHII ...!

HIRO MOVED.

SO
RATHER THAN HOPELESSLY KEEP GOING WITH THIS CHII-TOI-TSU...
HAS THE DORA 8-SOU AND 6-PIN IN HIS HAND ...!
I KNOW THAT TEN
YEAH.


PON ...!
MOVE...!
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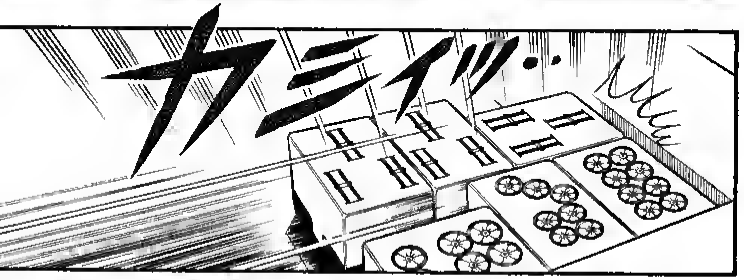
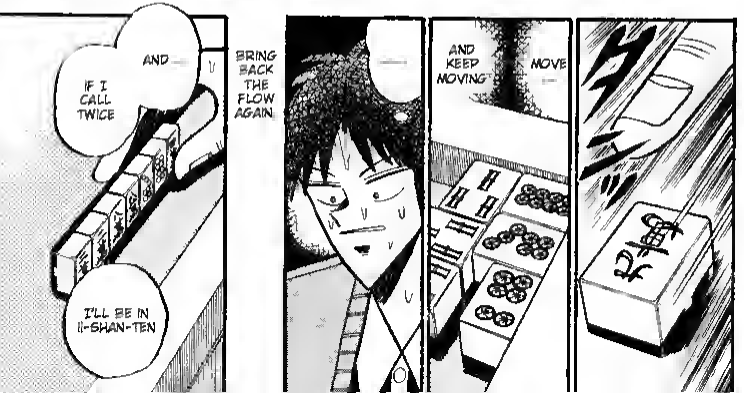

カミィ...


AND IF I CALL TWICE
I'LL BE IN II-SHAN-TEN
BRING BACK THE FLOW AGAIN
AND KEEP MOVING
MOVE
カミィ

I'M NOT FALLING BACK.
THE SAME AS THE CHII-TOI-TSU BEFORE.
二萬 二萬 八萬 八萬 四萬
CHII ...!
AFTER HIRO'S MOVEMENT
BUT—
JUST ONE THING LEFT...!
WEST MOVES
PROMISING ME A WIN AS SOON AS I GET TO TENPAI—
WIN—
TEN CAN DEAL IN RIGHT AWAY WITH THE 8-PIN
IF I CAN GET ANOTHER 2-MAN OR 8-MAN
WHEN I CAN GET THE 8-PIN THAT TEN IS HOLDING
NO.....
IT'S HALF A STEP AHEAD OF THE CHII-TOI-TSU I HAD...
EVEN THOUGH IT'S 11-SHAN-TEN LIKE BEFORE

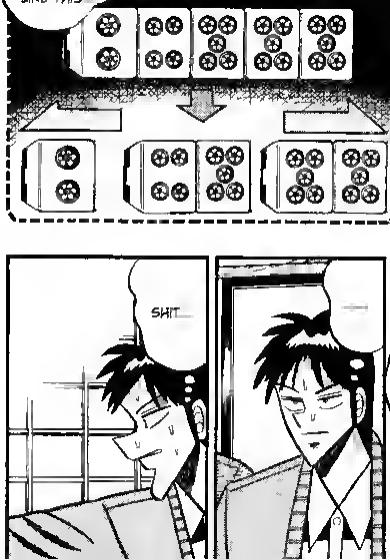
PON ...!
11TH TURN
THREE GROUPS EXPOSED IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE.
PON ...!

SOGA IN TENPAI
PINZU HON-ITSU ...!

ぎわ
...

WHEN YOU CONSIDER THAT THE 2-PIN CAME OUT AFTER HE CALLED PON ON THE 5-PIN
HIS WAIT...
THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE IT CHANGED FROM A SHAPE LIKE THIS...

THERE'S NO QUESTION THAT HE'S IN TENPAI
HE DROPPED TWO CONNECTED TILES, THE 1-PIN AND 2-PIN, AFTER EXPOSING THREE GROUPS


SHIT...

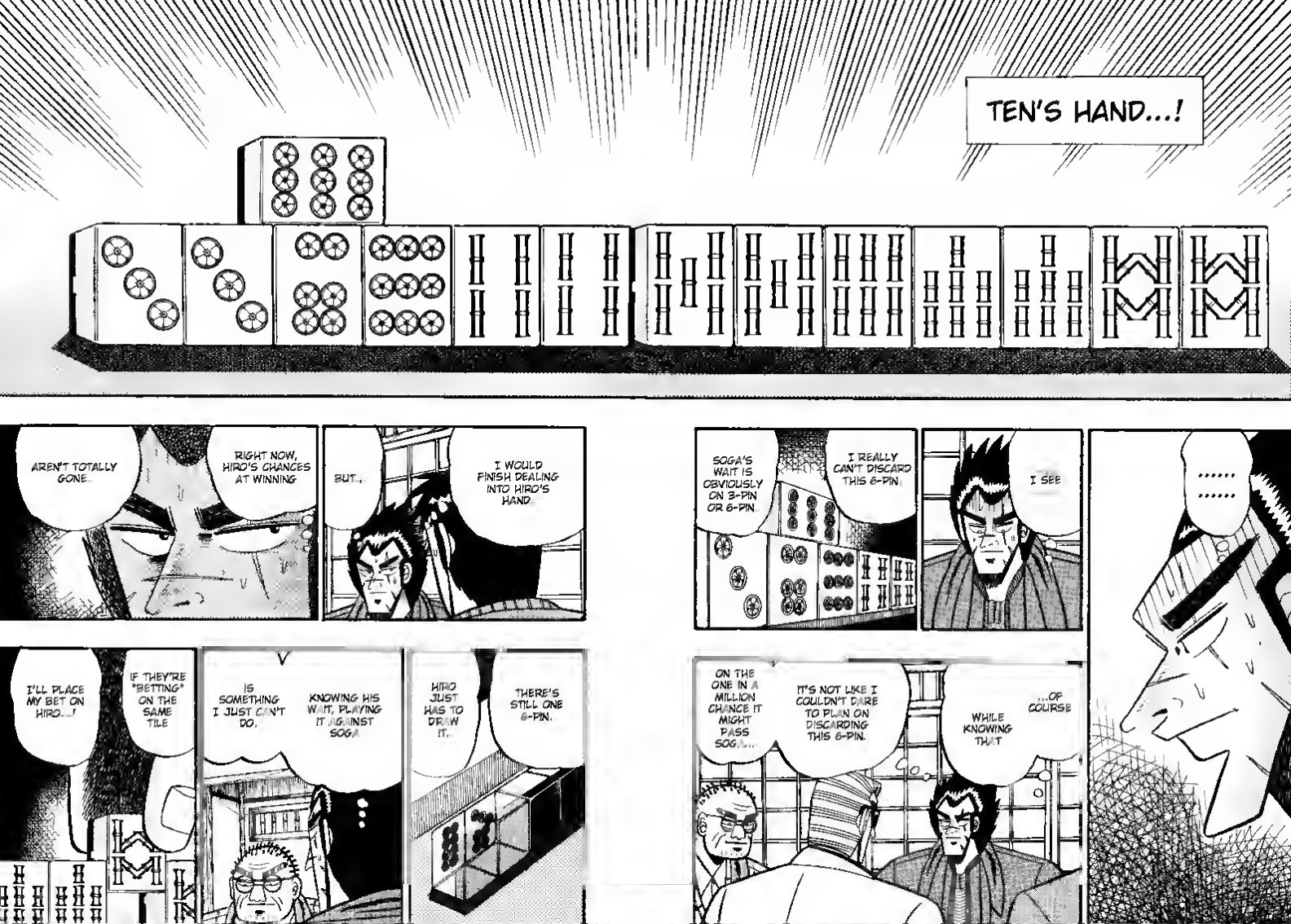
I'M 90% SURE THAT SOGA'S HAND IS
WAITING ON 3-PIN OR 6-PIN...

ざわ…
URGH
A READY HAND…!

TENPAI...!
IF TEN DISCARDS THE 6-PIN
NOW THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE
BUT
COULD HAVE DEALT IN WITH THE 6-PIN I'M WAITING FOR
DEALING IN ON PURPOSE IS IMPOSSIBLE.
SOGA WILL ATAMA-HANE
WITHOUT A DOUBT
ONE STEP TOO SLOW...
BUT...
IN THE NEXT TURN TEN
IF I'D GOTTEN TO TENPAI ONE TURN EARLIER
THIS TENP...!
.....

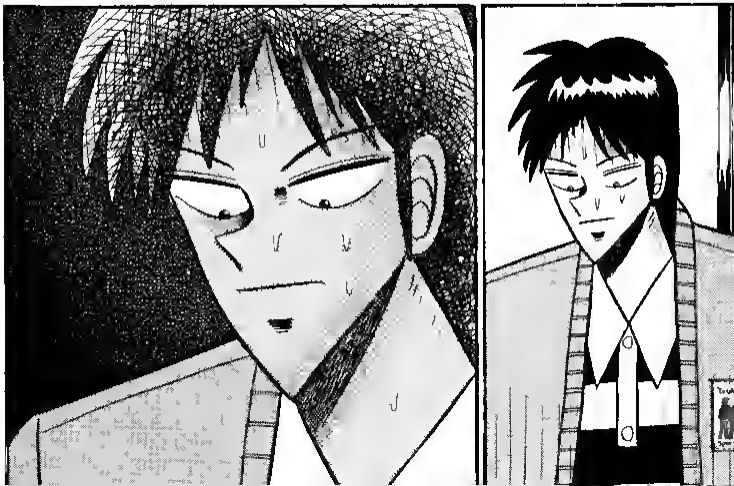
I MIGHT HAVE WON
IF I'D DRAWN WELL
MISSING THOSE 4-SOU DEALT ME A HEAVY BLOW
IN THE END
WITH THIS SHAPE
MY HOPES OF WINNING AREN'T COMPLETELY GONE YET
IT'S A PAINFUL MISTAKE
BUT
SURE
SHIT
GO!
FOR-WARD!
DON'T HOLD BACK!
AND SO
THERE'S STILL A CHANCE TO WIN

AT THIS TIME
.....
TEN KNEW HIRO WAS IN TENPAI
HE WASN'T GETTING ANY SIGNALS FROM HIRO, BUT
HE KNEW THE BAD SITUATION THEY WERE IN, TOO
THAT DEALING IN WAS IMPOSSIBLE
AND


TEN'S HAND...!
AREN'T TOTALLY GONE...
RIGHT NOW, HIRO'S CHANCES AT WINNING
BUT...
I WOULD FINISH DEALING INTO HIRO'S HAND.
SOGA'S WAIT IS OBVIOUSLY ON 3-PIN OR 6-PIN.
I REALLY CAN'T DISCARD THIS 6-PIN.
I SEE
.....
.....
I'LL PLACE MY BET ON HIRO...!
IF THEY'RE "BETTING" ON THE SAME TILE
IS SOMETHING I JUST CAN'T DO.
KNOWING HIS WAIT, PLAYING IT AGAINST SOGA
HIRO JUST HAS TO DRAW IT.
THERE'S STILL ONE 6-PIN.
ON THE ONE IN A MILLION CHANCE IT MIGHT PASS SOGA...
IT'S NOT LIKE I COULDN'T DARE TO PLAN ON DISCARDING THIS 6-PIN.
WHILE KNOWING THAT
...OF COURSE

I'LL BET ON HIS DETERMINATION!
HE'S STILL TRYING WITH ALL HIS MIGHT
EVEN THOUGH HE'S SCREWED UP

HIRO...!
DRAW IT...!
I CAN'T DEAL IN——!



CHAPTER 95
INTENTIONALLY DEALING IN

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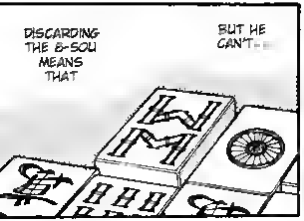
HIRO'S HAND


DISCARDING THE 8-SOU MEANS THAT
BUT HE CAN'T...

WANT TO DEAL INTO THAT RIGHT AWAY, UNCONDITIONALLY
TEN WOULD

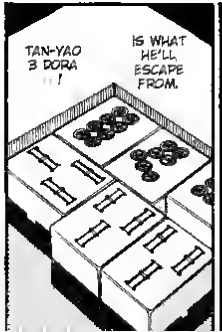
WITH THAT DRAW, HIROYUKI HAS A READY HAND NOW.

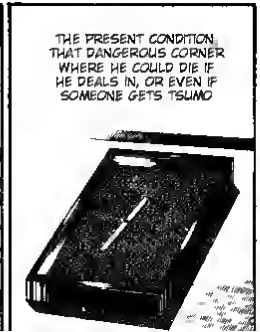
HEH HEH...

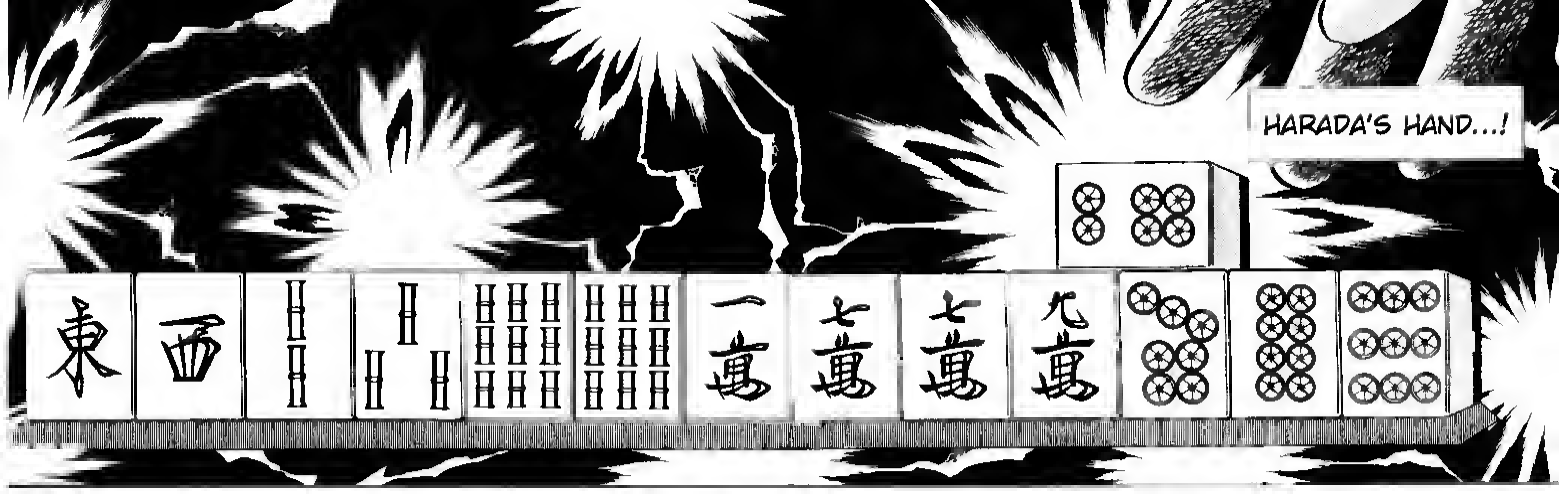
IT'S PROBABLY THE LATTER...!

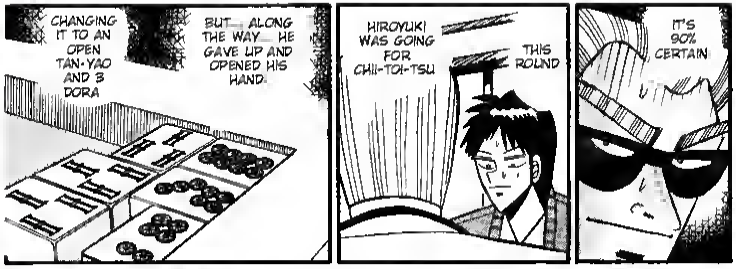
THIS TIME...

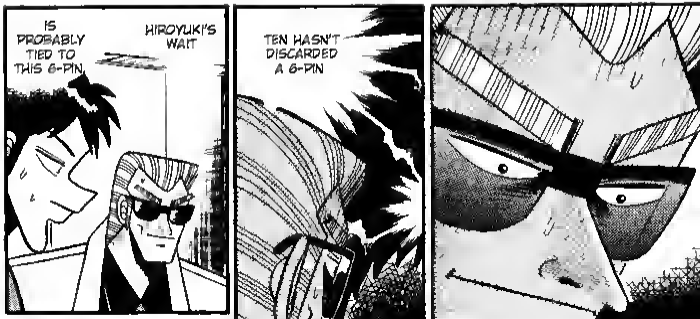
SOMETHING IS KEEPING HIM FROM DEALING IN.
HE DOESN'T HAVE THE RIGHT TILE OR...

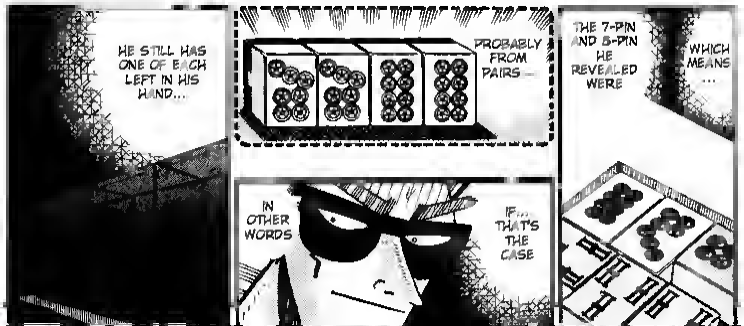

TAN-YAO 3 DORA !
IS WHAT HE'LL ESCAPE FROM.


THE PRESENT CONDITION THAT DANGEROUS CORNER WHERE HE COULD DIE IF HE DEALS IN, OR EVEN IF SOMEONE GETS TSUMO

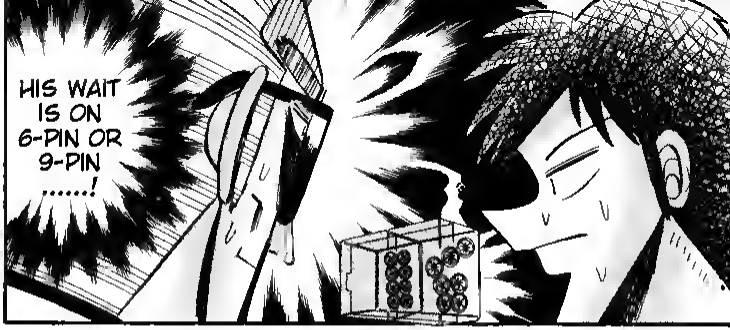

HARADA'S HAND...!

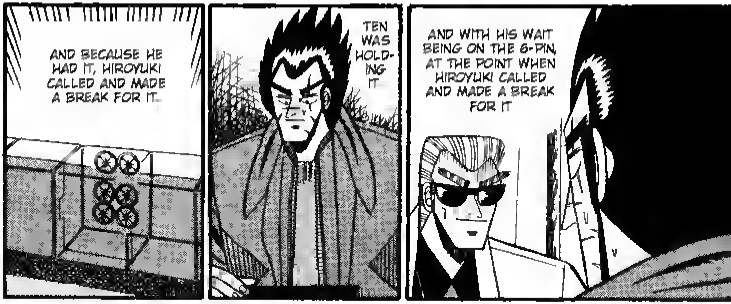

CHANGING IT TO AN OPEN TAN-YAO AND 3 DORA
BUT... ALONG THE WAY... HE GAVE UP AND OPENED HIS HAND.
HIROYUKI WAS GOING FOR CHII-TOI-TSU.
THIS ROUND
IT'S 90% CERTAIN.

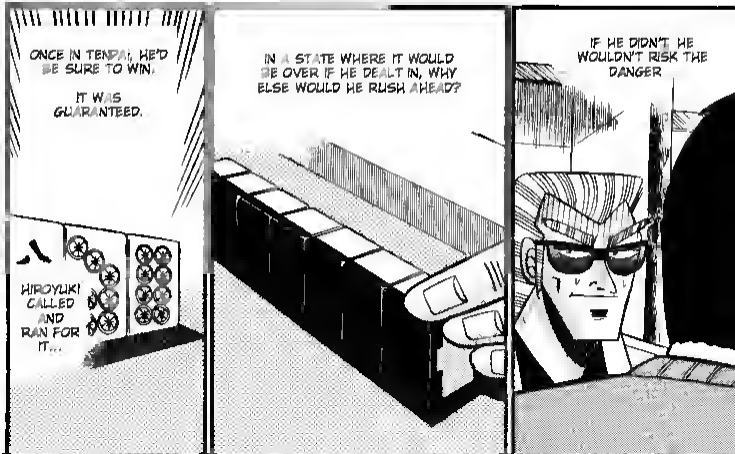

IS PROBABLY TIED TO THIS 6-PIN.
HIROYUKI'S WAIT
TEN HASN'T DISCARDED A 6-PIN.


HE STILL HAS ONE OF EACH LEFT IN HIS HAND...
PROBABLY FROM PAIRS—
IN OTHER WORDS
IF... THAT'S THE CASE
THE 7-PIN AND 5-PIN HE REVEALED WERE
WHICH MEANS...

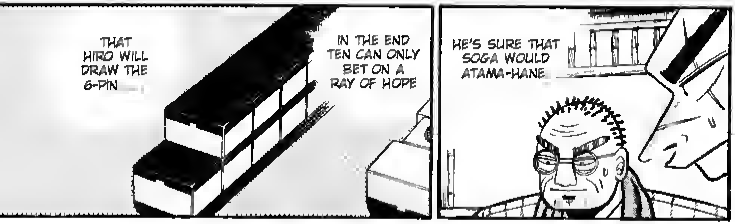
6-PIN OR 9-PIN.....!
YES...!

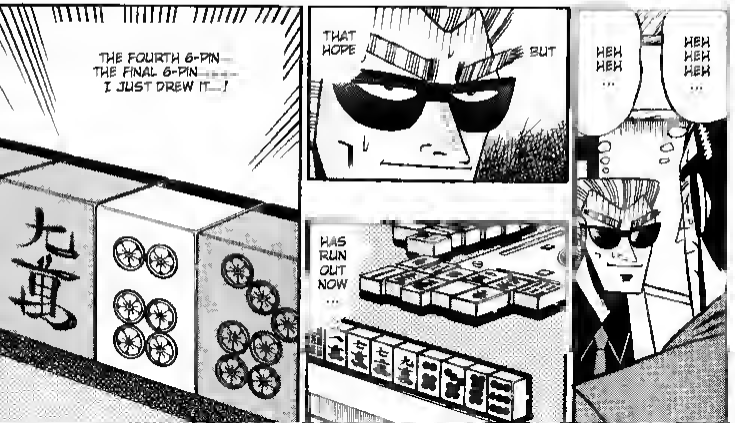

HIS WAIT IS ON 6-PIN OR 9-PIN .....!

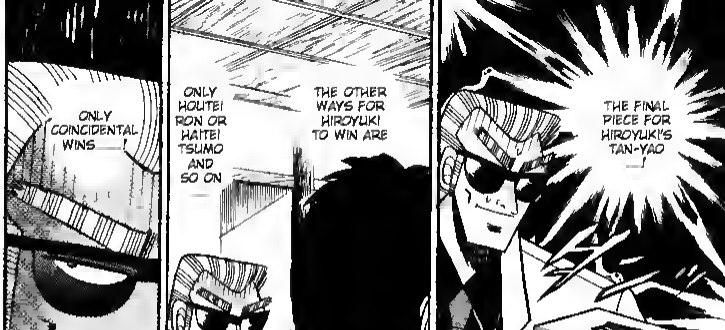

AND BECAUSE HE HAD IT, HIROYUKI CALLED AND MADE A BREAK FOR IT.
TEN WAS HOLDING IT
AND WITH HIS WAIT BEING ON THE 6-PIN, AT THE POINT WHEN HIROYUKI CALLED AND MADE A BREAK FOR IT


ONCE IN TENPAI, HE'D BE SURE TO WIN.
IT WAS GUARANTEED.
HIROYUKI CALLED AND RAN FOR IT...
IN A STATE WHERE IT WOULD BE OVER IF HE DEALT IN, WHY ELSE WOULD HE RUSH AHEAD?
IF HE DIDN'T, HE WOULDN'T RISK THE DANGER

SO FIRST OF ALL
THERE'S NO DOUBT THAT TEN HAS A 6-PIN...!
BUT
SOGA'S WAIT IS EASILY PREDICTED TO BE ON 6-PIN OR 9-PIN.
SO HE CAN'T DEAL IN WITH THE 6-PIN
IF HE TRIED

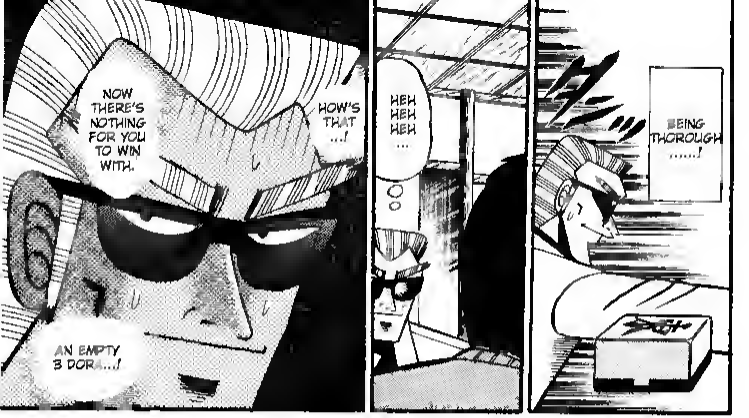

HE'S SURE THAT SOGA WOULD ATAMA-HANE
IN THE END TEN CAN ONLY BET ON A RAY OF HOPE
THAT HIRO WILL DRAW THE 6-PIN

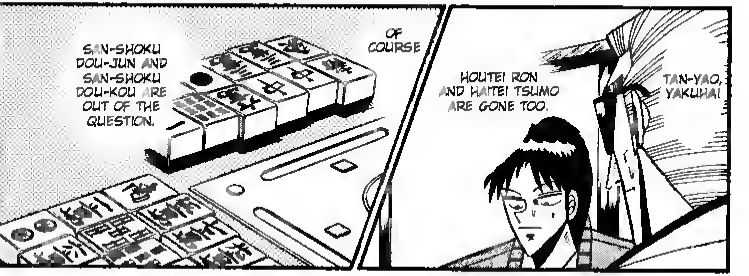

HEH HEH HEH ...
HEH HEH ...
BUT
THAT HOPE
HAS RUN OUT NOW ...
THE FOURTH 6-PIN THE FINAL 6-PIN I JUST DREW IT—!

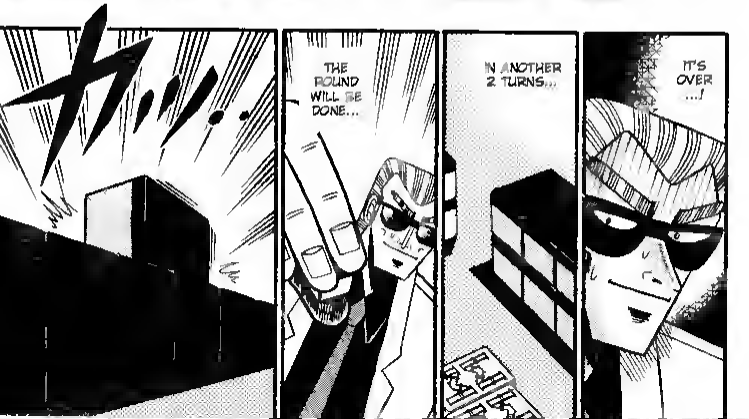

ONLY COINCIDENTAL WINS——!
ONLY HOUTEI RON OR HAITEI TSUMO AND SO ON——
THE OTHER WAYS FOR HIROYUKI TO WIN ARE
THE FINAL PIECE FOR HIROYUKI'S TAN-YAO——!

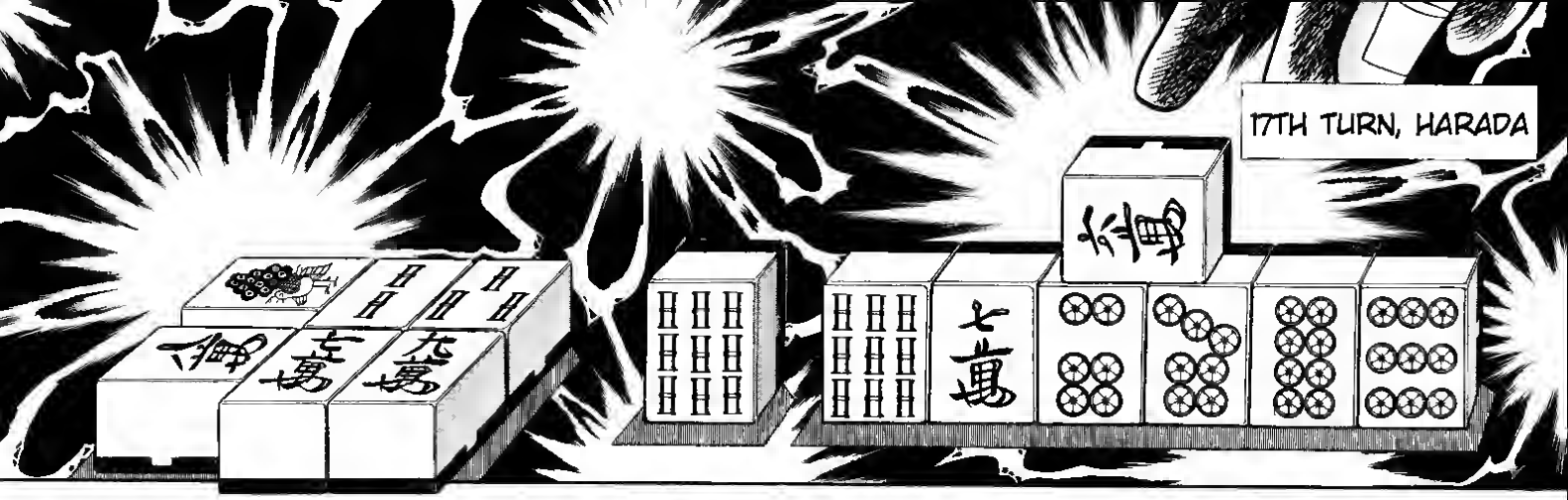
END-GAME
CHII ...!

ERASING THE CHANCES FOR HIROYUKI TO GET HAITEI TSUMO OR TEN TO GIVE HIM HOUTEI RON.
HE CALLED TWICE
CHII ...!
HARADA WORKED AT PICKING AWAY AT THAT COINCIDENCE.
LEAVING HIM WITHOUT A GHOST OF A CHANCE


NOW THERE'S NOTHING FOR YOU TO WIN WITH.
AN EMPTY 3 DORA...!
HOW'S THAT ...!
HEH HEH HEH ...
BEING THOROUGH .....!

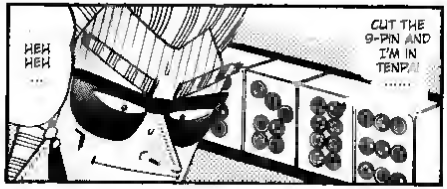

SAN-SHOKU DOU-JUN AND SAN-SHOKU DOU-KOU ARE OUT OF THE QUESTION.
OF COURSE
HOUTEI RON AND HAITEI TSUMO ARE GONE TOO.
TAN-YAO, YAKUHAI

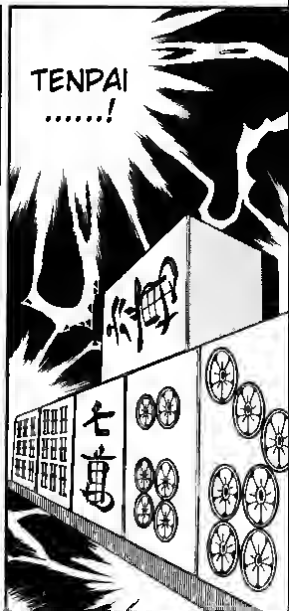

THE ROUND WILL BE DONE...
IN ANOTHER 2 TURNS...
IT'S OVER ...!


17TH TURN, HARADA

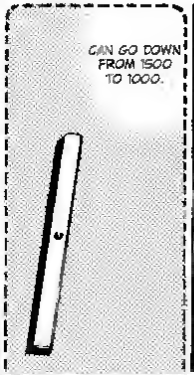
THE NO-TEN PENALTY.
AFTER GETTING THIS FAR, THE PROBLEM IS MORE

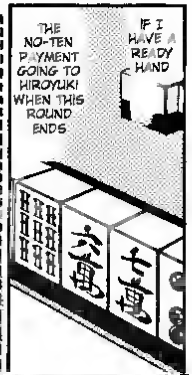
NO PROBLEM ...


HEH HEH ...
CUT THE 9-PIN AND I'M IN TENPAI .....


TENPAI .....!

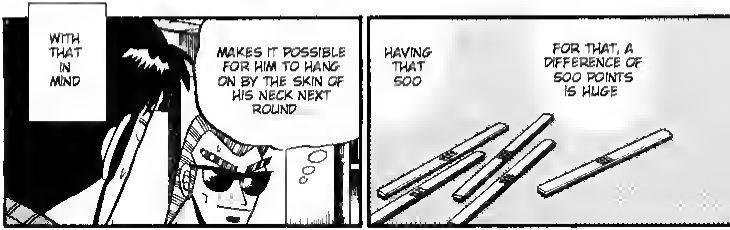
RIGHT NOW, THAT 500...
IT'S ONLY 500 POINTS, BUT .....


CAN GO DOWN FROM 1500 TO 1000.

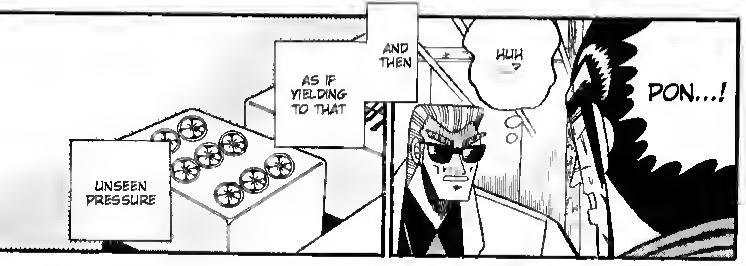

THE NO-TEN PAYMENT GOING TO HIROYUKI WHEN THIS ROUND ENDS.
IF I HAVE A READY HAND

9-PIN IS HIROYUKI'S WINNING TILE, BUT SINCE IT'S NOT THE LAST TILE...
HIRO DOESN'T HAVE ANY YAKU.

IN A STATE WHEN IT'S ALL OVER IF HE DEALS IN
IT'S NOT GOING TO BE SO EASY FOR HIROYUKI
I CAN'T WAIT AROUND
IF I CAN, I'LL MAKE HIM GO BELOW ZERO WITH TSUMO
OR AT LEAST THAT'S THE PLAN

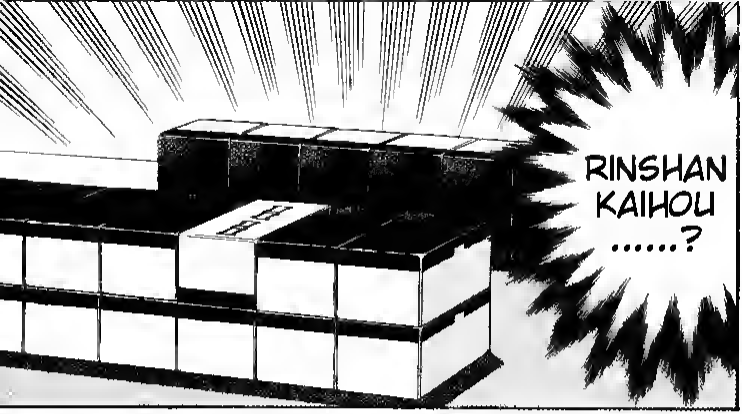

FOR THAT, A DIFFERENCE OF 500 POINTS IS HUGE
HAVING THAT 500
MAKES IT POSSIBLE FOR HIM TO HANG ON BY THE SKIN OF HIS NECK NEXT ROUND
WITH THAT IN MIND

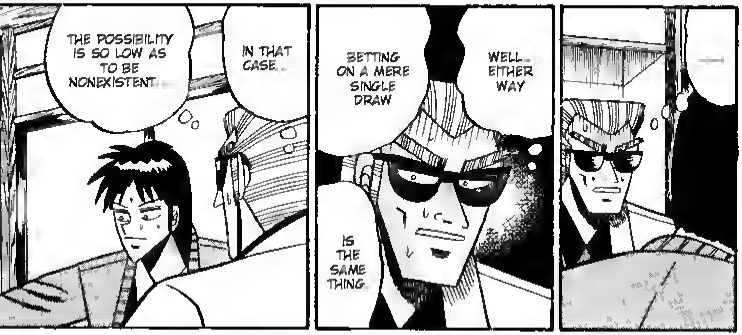
HARADA WAS THINKING
THAT HE'D PILE ON THE PRESSURE
WITH TEN AND HIRO'S LIVES HANGING FROM THE EDGE OF A CLIFF
GIVE THEM A PUSH


PON...!
HUH ...?
AND THEN
AS IF YIELDING TO THAT
UNSEEN PRESSURE

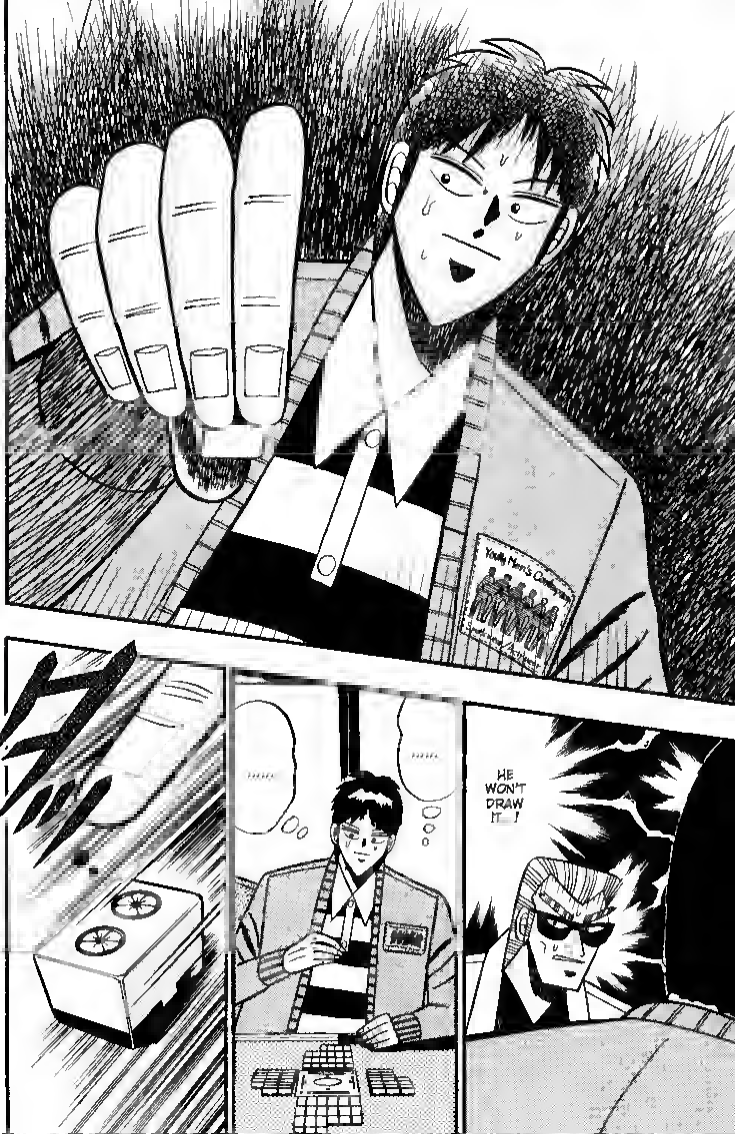
THAT 9-PIN ...
THE TILE THAT FLOWED OUT OF HARADA'S HAND...
INSTEAD TEN AND HIROYUKI'S
SPIRITS KEPT PUSHING ONWARD
IN THE FINAL MOMENTS OF THE GAME
YOU COULD SAY THEY WRENCHED THE 9-PIN AWAY FROM HARADA
GH...

DAMMIT...
HE'S STILL HANGING ON TO SOMETHING LIKE THAT...?
NOW THE LAST DRAW THAT I SHIFTED OVER TO SOGA
IS AT HIROYUKI AGAIN...
KAN...!
HUH...?
HE'S NOT AIMING FOR THE LAST TILE...?
HE'S AFTER...

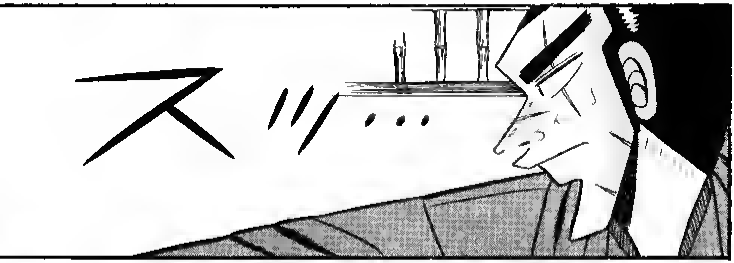

RINSHAN KAIHOU .....?


THE POSSIBILITY IS SO LOW AS TO BE NONEXISTENT...
IN THAT CASE...
BETTING ON A MERE SINGLE DRAW
IS THE SAME THING.
WELL... EITHER WAY

THERE'S NO WAY HE'LL DRAW IT...!
HE'D DRAW IT THAT EASILY...!
AS IF
THERE'S ONLY ONE OF THE WINNING TILE, 9-PIN, LEFT.
WITH TEN'S PON JUST NOW

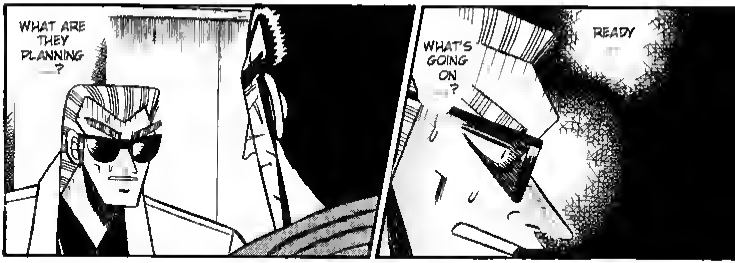

Youth Hunt's Confession
HE WON'T DRAW IT...!

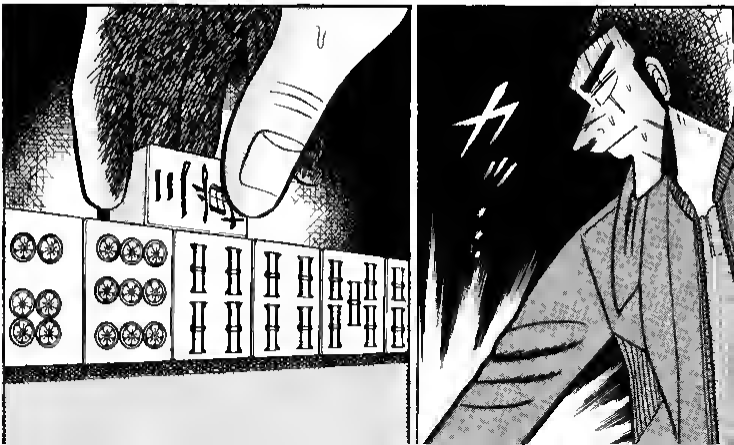
IT'S ONLY NATURAL...
OF COURSE
HMPH...
HE DIDN'T DRAW IT...!

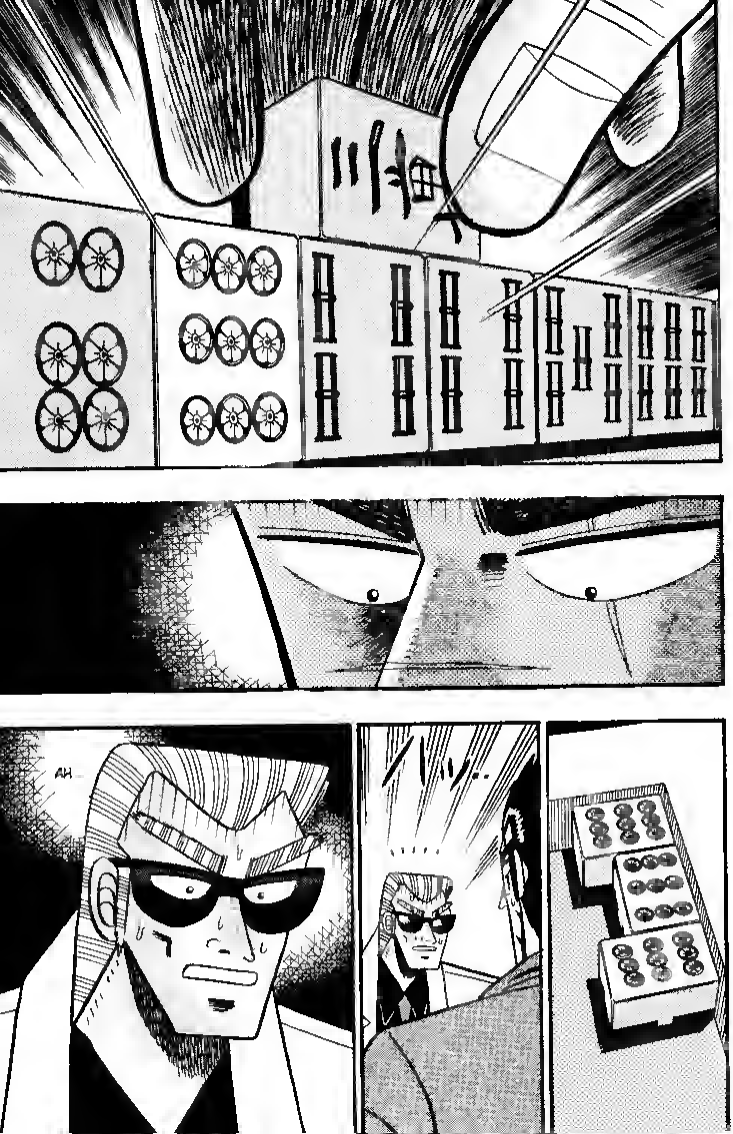

スッ…

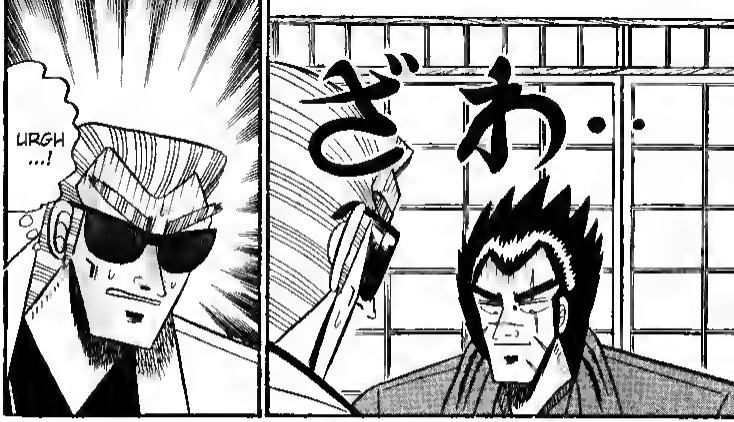
READY...?
HUH...?
.....RIGHT.
IT'S READY.....
HIRO...
.....

ざわ…
ざわ…

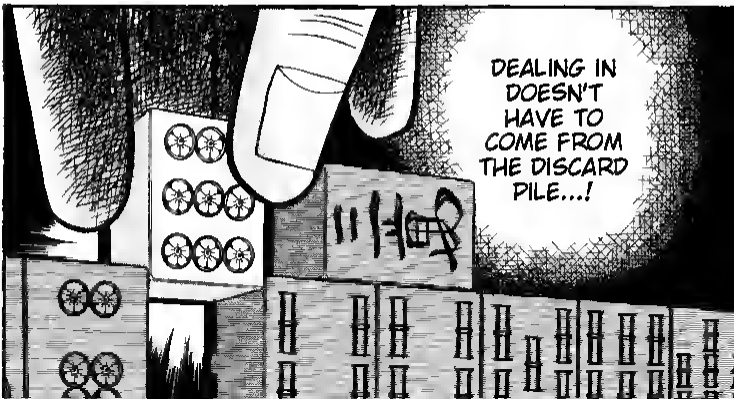

WHAT ARE THEY PLANNING—?
WHAT'S GOING ON—?
READY



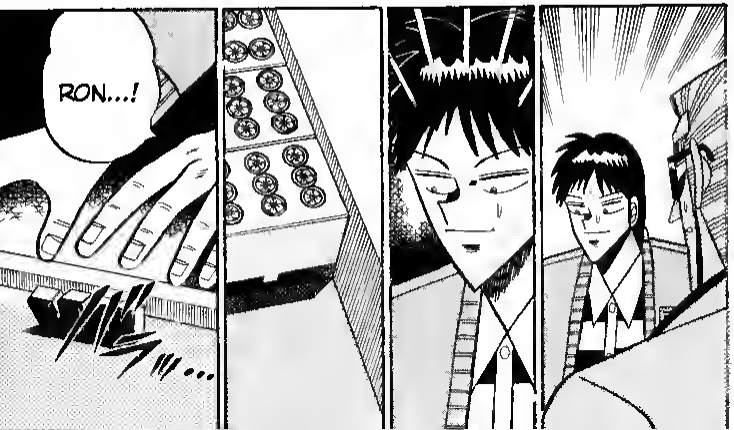

AH...
ハッ..


URGH ...!
ざわ・・

THAT'S RIGHT
OH SHIT ...!


DEALING IN DOESN'T HAVE TO COME FROM THE DISCARD PILE...!

KAN ...!
カミ!!
GH...!


RON...!

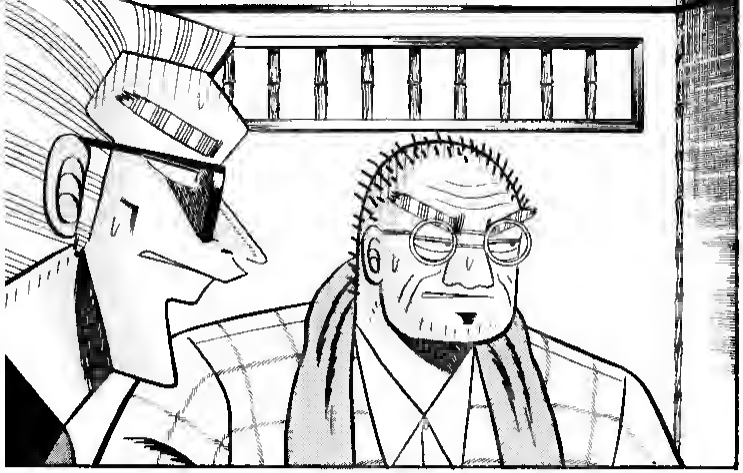
WHAT A SLIM CHANCE IT WAS...!
WHAT A BLUNDER...!
.....
KH...
CHAN-KAN, 3 DORA .....!
HE DEALT INTO
WASN'T PON FROM A PAIR
TEN'S PON ON THE 9-PIN
AND WHAT A MISTAKE
TO MAKE...
HE HAD THREE IN HIS HAND
PON...!

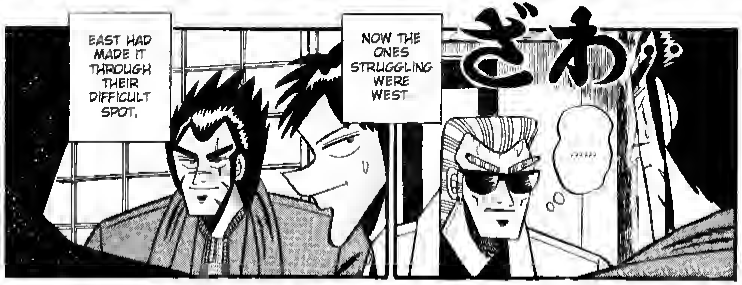
HIRO...
KH...
HEH HEH
WHY THE 9-PIN...
WHY... WHY DIDN'T I REALIZE THAT...!
...
WITH THE SURPRISE ATTACK OF CHAN-KAN, 3 DORA!
ESCAPE FROM DANGER
A SAFE RETURN
LOOKS LIKE YOU MADE IT.
YEAH...

天
CHAPTER 96
HARVEST

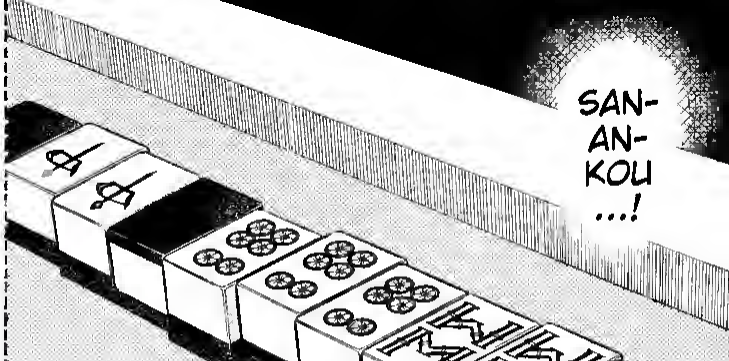
A DARING TALE OF ESCAPE—!
THROUGH A MIRACULOUS PLAN, TEN SAVED HIRO
IN THE PREVIOUS ROUND
WITHOUT A CARE FOR THE THREE 9-PIN HE HELD, TEN
ON THE 9-PIN THAT HARADA DISCARDED
CALLED PON—
WITHOUT KAN
AND THEN ON THE NEXT TURN WHEN HE DREW
THE LAST 9-PIN
KAN—!
HIROYUKI, WHO COULDN'T WIN WITHOUT A YAKU
USED THE YAKU, CHAN-KAN
AND TOOK THE WIN
THIS AMAZING PLAN
BROUGHT HIROYUKI, WHO HAD BEEN IN DANGER OF DROPPING BELOW ZERO WITH ONLY 1000 POINTS
UP TO 9000

HE ESCAPED!
FROM THAT SUDDEN-DEATH SITUATION
FROM A ROUND OF IMMEDIATE DESTRUCTION IF SOMEONE CALLED TSUMO
NOW...
HIRO'S POINT COUNTERS ROSE TO 14200...
DEALT INTO HIROYUKI'S HAND NEXT ROUND FOR 5200
AND TEN
FOR NOW, HE WAS SAFE...
FROM THE SITUATION WHERE HE COULD DROP BELOW ZERO
HE WENT EVEN FURTHER
IF SOMEONE GOT TSUMO OR HIROYUKI DEALT IN




EAST HAD MADE IT THROUGH THEIR DIFFICULT SPOT.
NOW THE ONES STRUGGLING WERE WEST.
ざわ
.....

NEEDLESS TO SAY—
THAT "HARVEST" WAS
NOW THEY HAD FINISHED COLLECTING THEIR "HARVEST"
OF HIROYUKI AND HIS 1000 POINTS.
BYPASSING THE RISK


SAN-
AN-
KOU
...!

THE KEY THAT DETERMINED WHO WOULD WIN OR LOSE
SAN-AN-KOU
THE MOST DIFFICULTY POINT IN THE CURRENT GAME OF CLEAR MAHJONG

AS COULD BE IMAGINED
IN FACT
AND
THAT MASSIVE "HARVEST".
EAST HAD ALREADY COMPLETED

IN CLEAR MAHJONG
WAS THE GREATEST OBSTACLE
THE YAKU CALLED SAN-AN-KOU
THIS WAS MAJOR ...!
THE SIZE OF IT
IT WAS THE HIGHEST AND LARGEST HURDLE.
WITH A HUGE BOULDER .....
IT BLOCKED THE ROAD THROUGH
ESPECIALLY WEST, WHO HAD NOT YET COMPLETED IT.
WHILE THEY WERE ADVANCING THE MATCH
WAS SOMETHING BOTH CAMPS KNEW

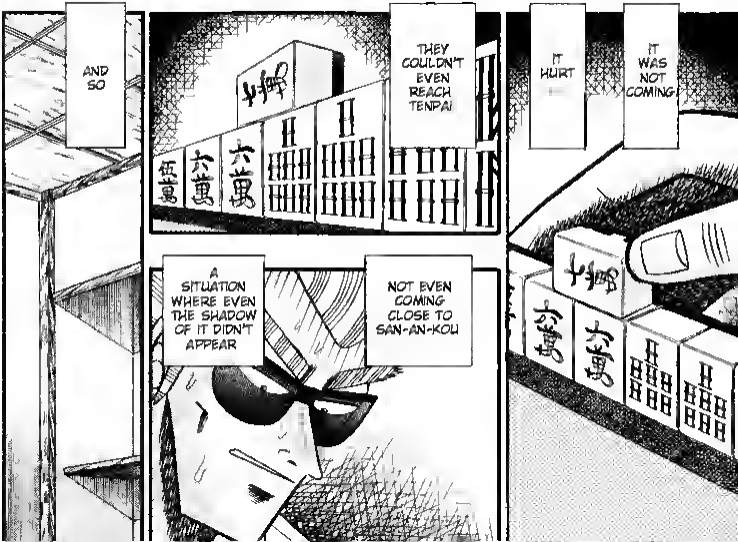
THE HANDICAP OF THE UNFINISHED SAN-AN-KOU ...
CHII..!
IT HUNG HEAVILY OVER THEIR HEADS .....
AS TIME WENT BY

HUNG OVER THEM ...!

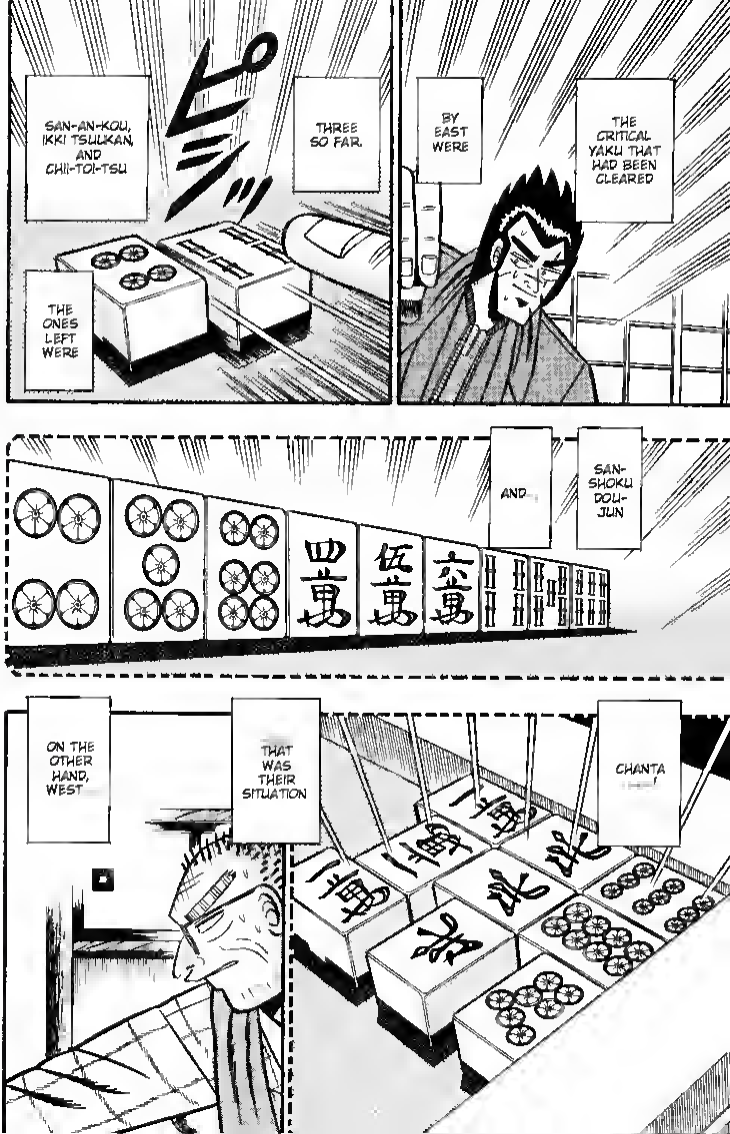
THE OTHER YAKU WERE NO PROBLEM..
YES ...
IKKI TSUUKAN .....
1000 POINTS, BUT...
1000 POINTS .....
RON.

IF THE TWO PEOPLE USED TEAMWORK
A GAME OF CLEAR MAHJONG WHERE YOU WERE FREE TO DEAL IN INTENTIONALLY
THERE WAS COOPERATION WITHIN EACH CAMP FROM THE START
EVEN FOR THAT ONE, A PERSON COULD DEAL IN AT THE END.
CHII-TOI-TSU COULDN'T BE SUPPORTED THAT WAY, BUT
WOULD NEVER BE AN ISSUE.
COMPLETING THE OTHER YAKU
IF IT WASN'T IN YOUR OWN HAND, IT WAS USELESS.
TEAMWORK DIDN'T MEAN SHIT FOR THAT
HAD THREE CLOSED TRIPLES THAT HAD TO BE COMPLETED ON ONE'S OWN.
BUT ONLY SAN-AN-KOU
THAT WAS SAN-AN-KOU

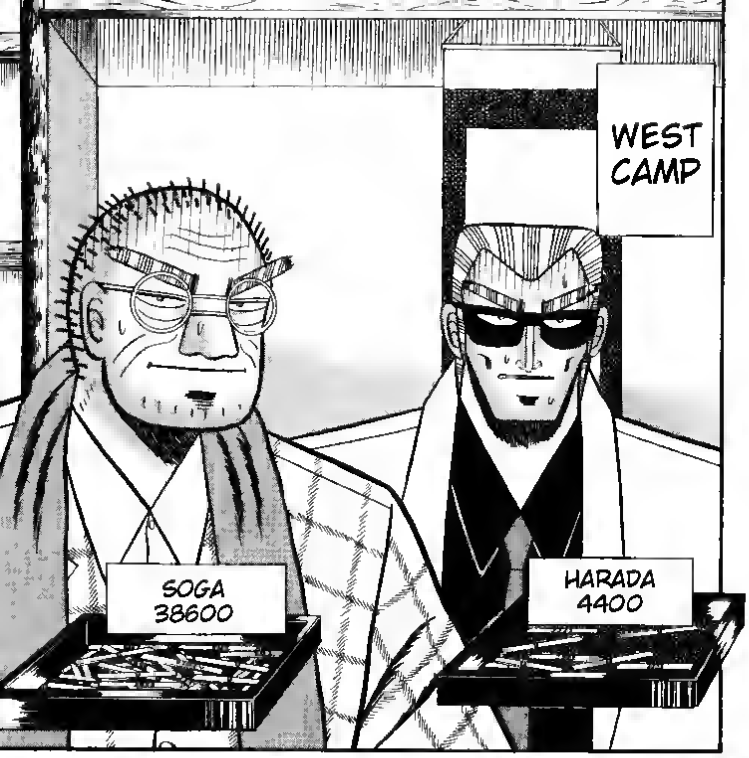
TSUMO
CHII-TOI-TSU
OTHER YAKU
WERE CLEARED RELATIVELY EASILY BY WEST
ONLY
THAT SAN-AN-KOU WAS DIFFERENT


AND SO
THEY COULDN'T EVEN REACH TENPAI
IT HURT
IT WAS NOT COMING!
A SITUATION WHERE EVEN THE SHADOW OF IT DIDN'T APPEAR
NOT EVEN COMING CLOSE TO SAN-AN-KOU

ALL THAT HAPPENED WAS THE PASSING OF TIME
ENTERING THE 2ND HAN-CHAN
1 HOUR PASSED
THIS WAS WHAT THE SITUATION HAD COME DOWN TO
GETTING CLOSE TO THE FINAL ROUND
THAT HAN-CHAN WAS ALSO
AND AFTER 30 MINUTES
AND
FOR NOW, NEITHER WAS IN A SITUATION WHERE THEY COULD IMMEDIATELY DROP BELOW ZERO
TEN AT 39700, HIROYUKI AT 17300
AT THIS POINT IN TIME THE POINTS OF THE TWO PEOPLE OF EAST WERE


THE CRITICAL YAKU THAT HAD BEEN CLEARED
BY EAST WERE
THREE SO FAR
SAN-AN-KOU, IKKI TSUUKAN, AND CHII-TOI-TSU
THE ONES LEFT WERE
SAN-SHOKU DOU-JUN
AND
CHANTA
THAT WAS THEIR SITUATION
ON THE OTHER HAND, WEST

PLAYING IN A SITUATION WHERE HE COULD IMMEDIATELY DROP BELOW ZERO.
POINT-WISE, THEY HAD A RED LIGHT.
HARADA HAD 44OO.
SOGA WAS IN THE SAFE ZONE WITH 38600, BUT
WAS IN A TIGHT SPOT IN TERMS OF POINTS
THE YAKU THEY HAD LEFT TO COMPLETE WERE THE DIFFICULT POINT.
THE SAME AS EAST, WITH THREE COMPLETED... IKKI TSUUKAN, CHII-TOI-TSU, AND CHANTA.
THE SITUATION FOR CLEAR MAHJONG WAS
AND THEN
IT WAS SURE TO BE TOUGH.
SAN-AN-KOU ...!
THE LAST ONE...
SAN-SHOKU DOU-JUN AND
WHEN EVERYTHING WAS PUT TOGETHER, IT WAS LIKE SO.
AT THIS POINT IN TIME, WEST WAS IN AN UNUSUALLY PRECARIOUS SITUATION.
THE SOUTH 3RD ROUND OF THE 2ND HAN-CHAN
NEXT PAGE



YAKU NOT CLEARED

SAN-AN-KOU

SAN-SHOKU DOU-JUN

CLEARED YAKU

CHANTA

CHII-TOI-TSU

IKKI TSUUKAN

YAKU NOT CLEARED

CHANTA

SAN-SHOKU DOU-JUN

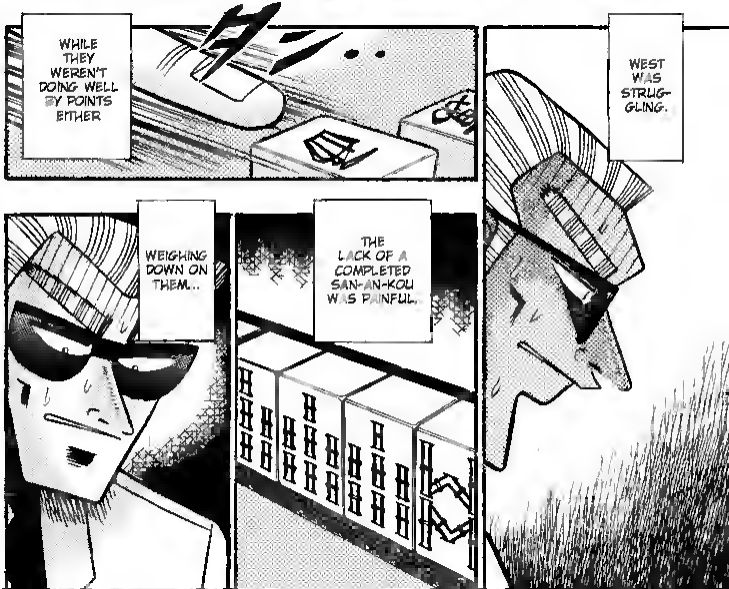
CLEARED YAKU

SAN-AN-KOU

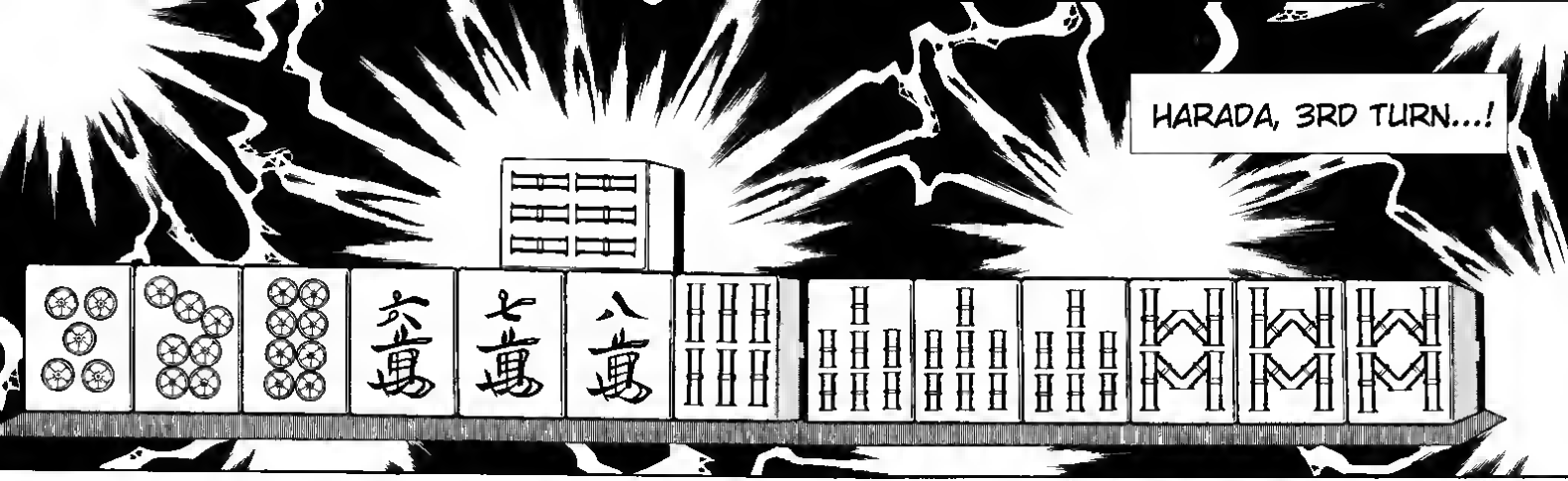
CHII-TOI-TSU

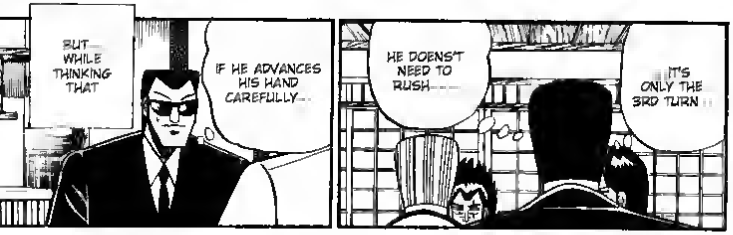
IKKI TSUUKAN

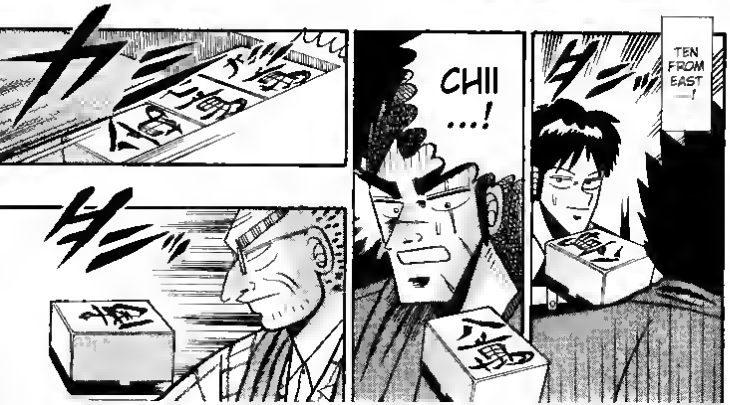
.....
...


WHILE THEY WEREN'T DOING WELL BY POINTS EITHER
WEST WAS STRUGGLING.
WEIGHING DOWN ON THEM...
THE LACK OF A COMPLETED SAN-AN-KOU WAS PAINFUL.

AS SOON AS THEY CLEAR
IT'S DOWN TO THE FINAL STRETCH
CHANTA AND SAN-SHOKU, THAT'S IT
5-6 ROUNDS...? IF IT GOES BADLY, 2-3 ROUNDS
IS ONLY A MERE
IF SO
THE AMOUNT OF TIME WE HAVE LEFT
WHICH MEANS THAT
THE END.
THIS IS THE LAST CHANCE!
WITH A SAN-AN-KOU
I STILL HAVEN'T BEEN BLESSED
THIS SET OF TILES IS MY LAST!


HARADA, 3RD TURN...!

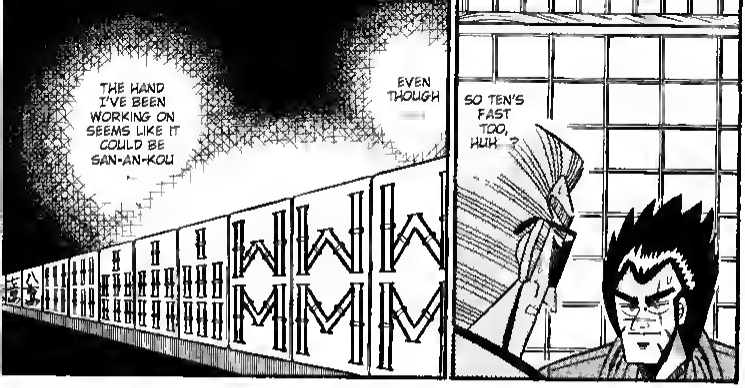

BUT WHILE THINKING THAT
IF HE ADVANCES HIS HAND CAREFULLY...
HE DOESN'T NEED TO RUSH...
IT'S ONLY THE 3RD TURN...

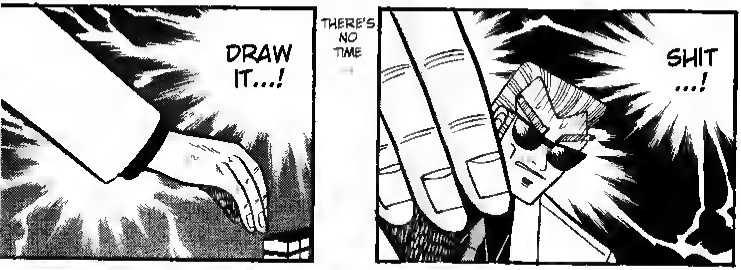

CHII ...!
TEN FROM EAST...!

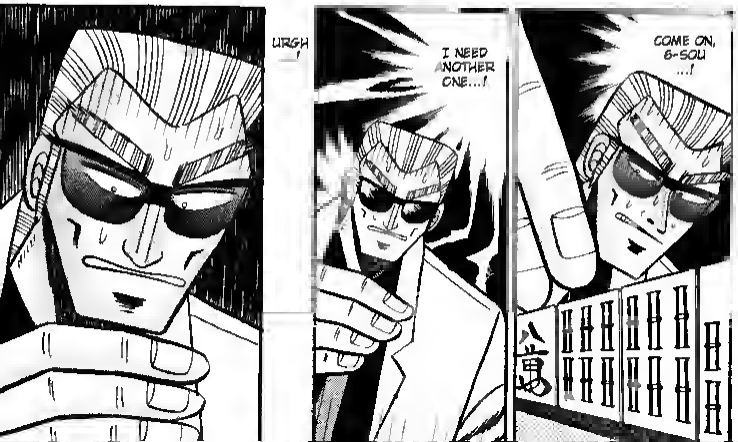
THEY'RE PILING UP
GOOD.
ざわ...

SAN-AN-KOU COULD BE POSSIBLE TOO.
IS A HAND WITH GOOD POTENTIAL FOR SAN-SHOKU BUT IF THEY KEEP PILING UP
THIS HAND...

PON ...!
A QUICK ATTACK !
GH...


THE HAND I'VE BEEN WORKING ON SEEMS LIKE IT COULD BE SAN-AN-KOU
EVEN THOUGH
SO TEN'S FAST TOO, HUH...?

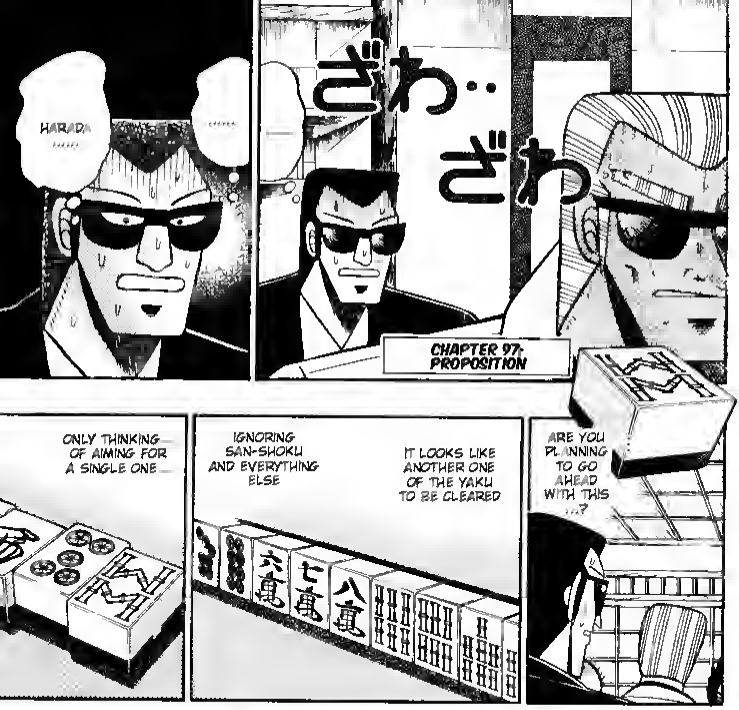

DRAW IT...!
THERE'S NO TIME
SHIT ...!

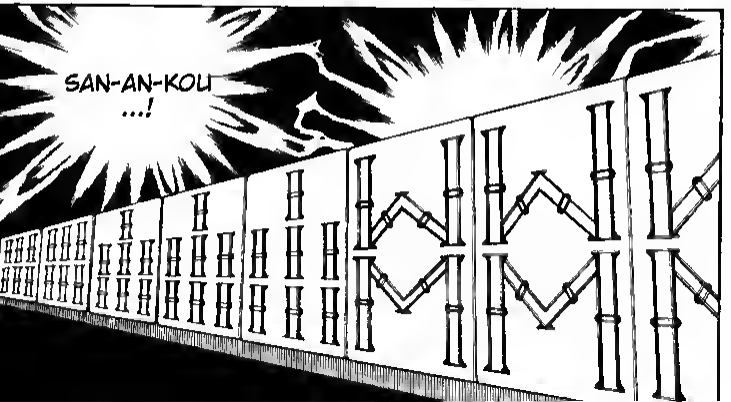

URGH
I NEED ANOTHER ONE...!
COME ON, 6-SOU ...!

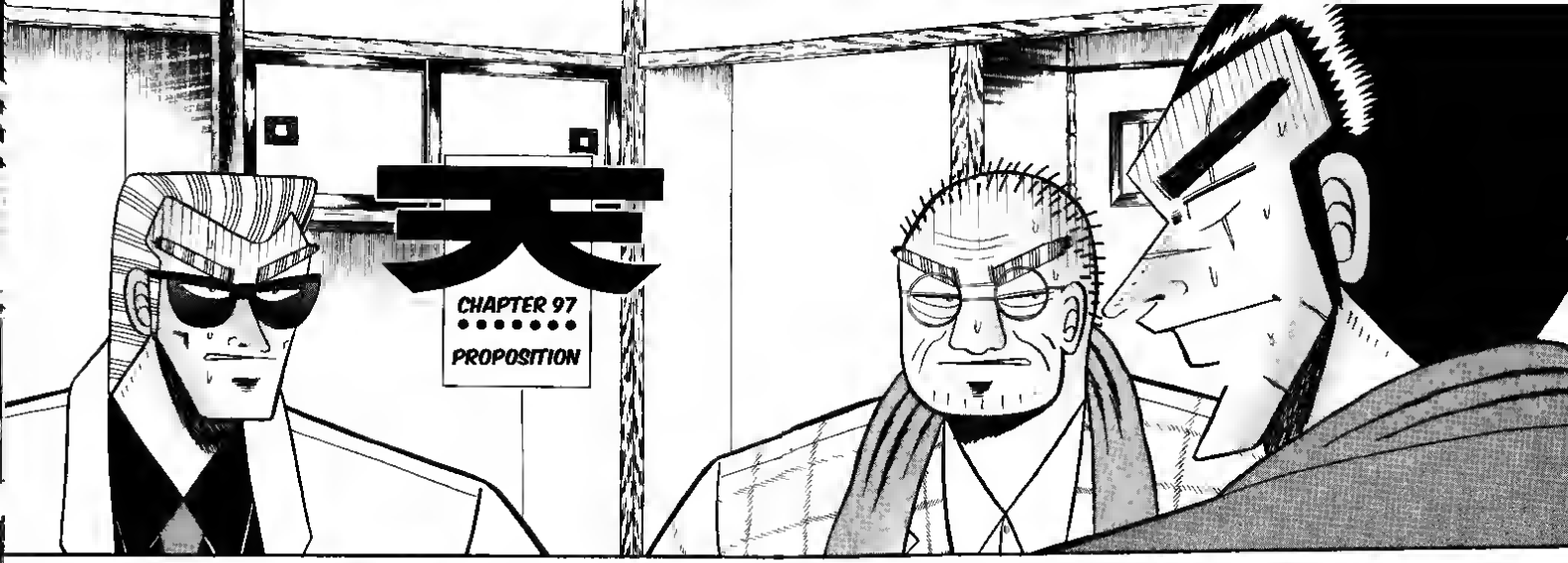
HE GOT THE 8-SOU...!
THE ONLY THING HE CAN DISCARD IS THE 7-SOU...
THIS IS THE IDEAL WAY TO GO NOW...
HE CAN'T OPPOSE THE FLOW NOW.
AFTER GETTING THAT
THERE'S NOTHING HE CAN DO
SO HE GOT THE 8-SOU...?
KH...
HO...!!
ANOTHER ONE OF THE YAKU THAT HASN'T BEEN CLEARED YET.
HE'S IN THE RIGHT SHAPE FOR SAN-SHOKU
IF HE DISCARDS 7-SOU

GH...!
NOT USING THE IDEAL SHAPE FOR SAN-SHOKU
HE'S...
NOT USING IT
HE CAN'T DO THAT
THAT'S CRAZY

KNOWING IT'S MADNESS TO GO FOR SAN-AN-KOU...!
STRIKING FORWARD...!


HARADA
.....
ざわ..
ざわ
CHAPTER 97: PROPOSITION
ONLY THINKING OF AIMING FOR A SINGLE ONE...
IGNORING SAN-SHOKU AND EVERYTHING ELSE
IT LOOKS LIKE ANOTHER ONE OF THE YAKU TO BE CLEARED
ARE YOU PLANNING TO GO AHEAD WITH THIS ...?


SAN-AN-KOU ...!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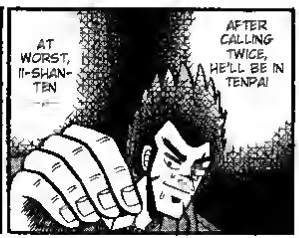
CHAPTER 97
PROPOSITION

カッ!!


AT WORST, 11-SHANTEN
AFTER CALLING TWICE, HE'LL BE IN TENPAI

TEN IS FAST...!

AT THIS TIME, TEN WAS

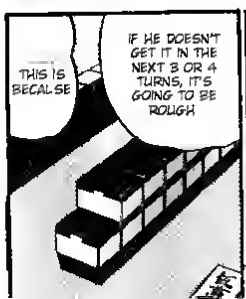
YES...

HARADA DOESN'T HAVE ANY TIME LEFT
WHICH MEANS
IT'S GOING TO BE ROUGH

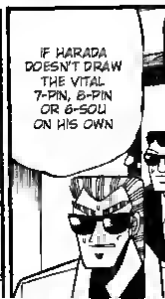
LOW!
THE CHANCES OF THIS WORKING BY FORCING IT ARE

BUT...

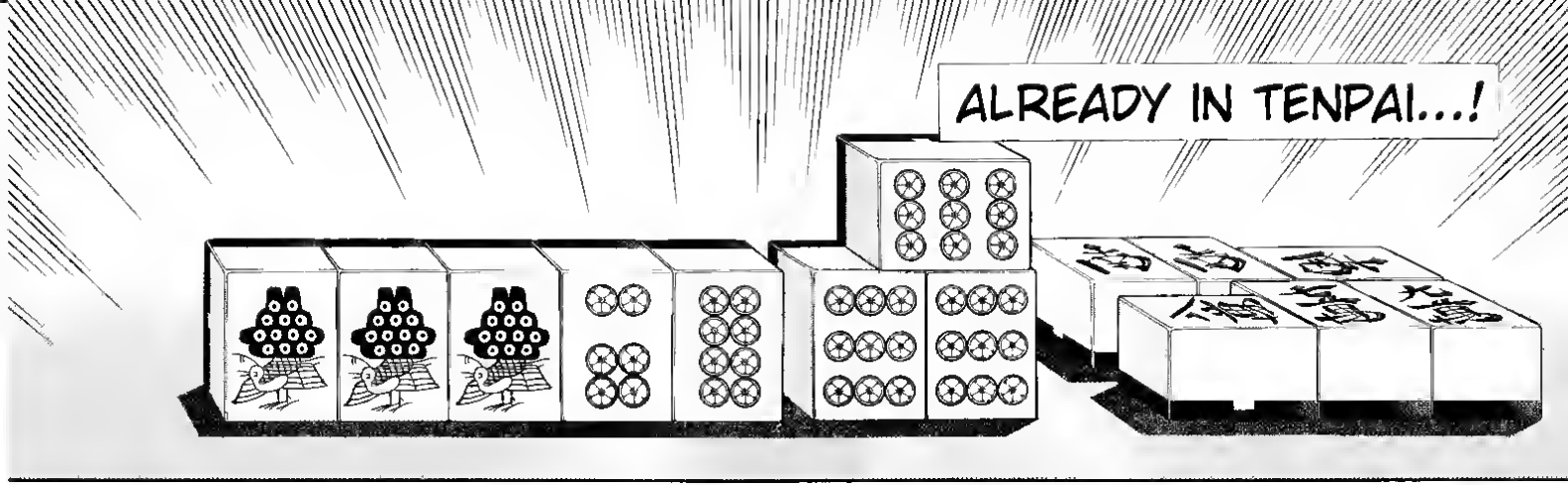
.....

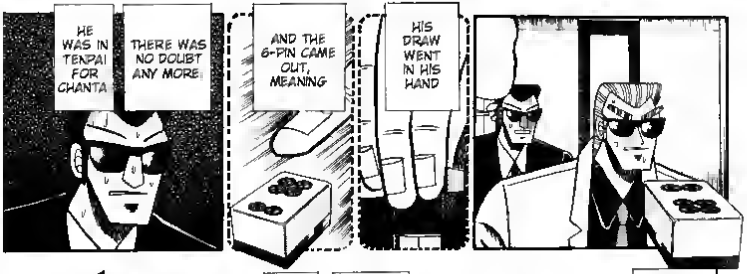

THIS IS BECAUSE
IF HE DOESN'T GET IT IN THE NEXT 3 OR 4 TURNS, IT'S GOING TO BE ROUGH

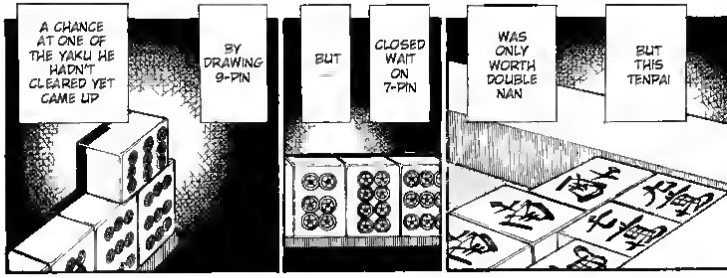
AND EVEN IF HE DRAWS ONE OF THEM
HE'S OUT...


IF HARADA DOESN'T DRAW THE VITAL 7-PIN, 8-PIN OR 6-SOU ON HIS OWN

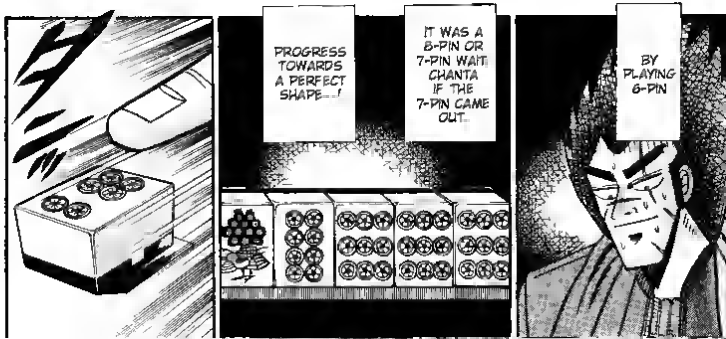
SAN-AN-KOU IS THE ONLY ONE THAT CAN'T GET ANY SUPPORT


ALREADY IN TENPAI...!

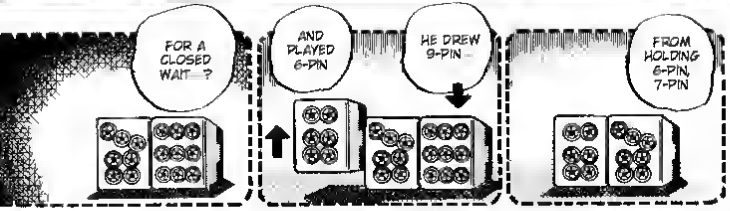

HE WAS IN TENPAI FOR CHANTA
THERE WAS NO DOUBT ANY MORE.
AND THE 6-PIN CAME OUT, MEANING
HIS DRAW WENT IN HIS HAND

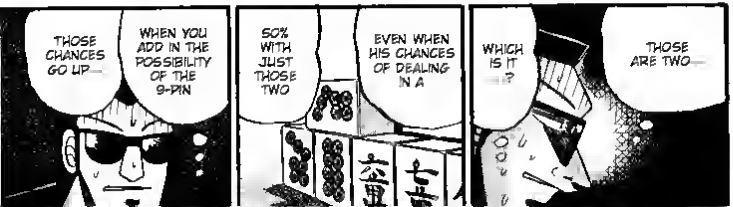

A CHANCE AT ONE OF THE YAKU HE HADN'T CLEARED YET CAME UP
BY DRAWING 9-PIN
BUT
CLOSED WAIT ON 7-PIN
WAS ONLY WORTH DOUBLE NAN
BUT THIS TENPAI

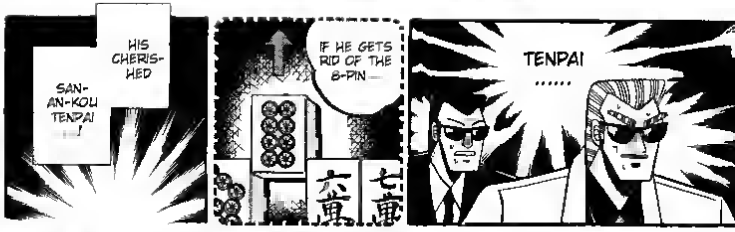
HARADA...!
SEEING THE SITUATION
WITH A GOOD CHANCE HIS WAIT WAS ABOVE THAT 6-PIN.


PROGRESS TOWARDS A PERFECT SHAPE...!
IT WAS A 8-PIN OR 7-PIN WAIT CHANTA IF THE 7-PIN CAME OUT.
BY PLAYING 6-PIN

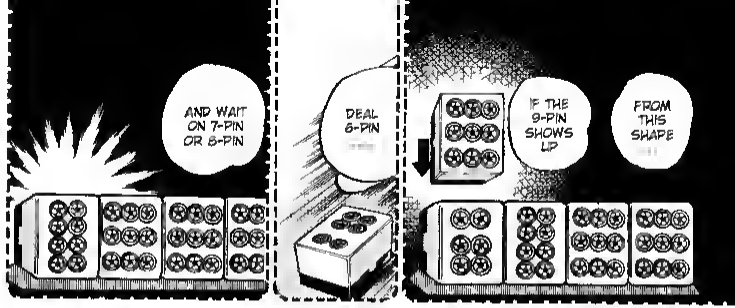
DREW 7-PIN...!

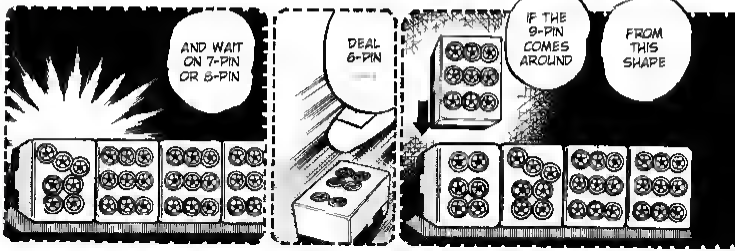

FOR A CLOSED WAIT...?
AND PLAYED 6-PIN
HE DREW 9-PIN...
FROM HOLDING 6-PIN, 7-PIN
FOR AN END WAIT...
PLAYED 6-PIN
DREW 9-PIN
HOLDING 6-PIN, 8-PIN
OR


THOSE CHANCES GO UP...
WHEN YOU ADD IN THE POSSIBILITY OF THE 9-PIN
50% WITH JUST THOSE TWO
EVEN WHEN HIS CHANCES OF DEALING IN A
WHICH IS IT...?
THOSE ARE TWO...


SAN-AN-KOU TENPAI!
HIS CHERISHED
IF HE GETS RID OF THE 8-PIN...
TENPAI
.....

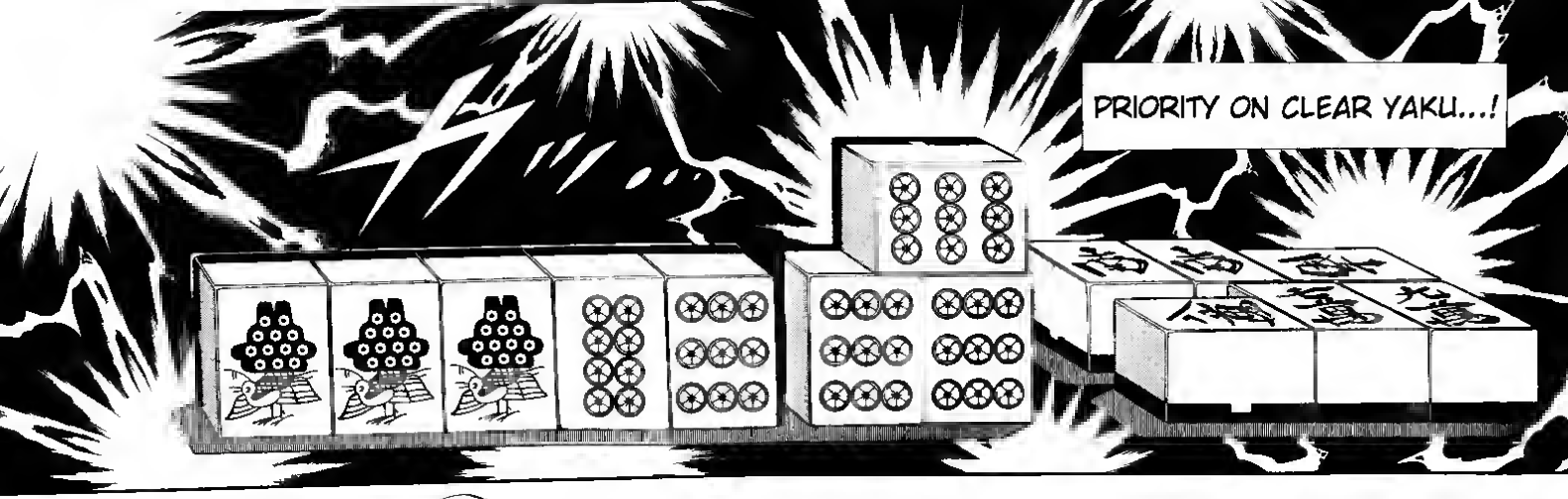
IN SHORT
AFTER TEN DREW THE 6-PIN FROM HIS HAND
HE CAN'T DISCARD THIS 8-PIN
BUT... BUT...


AND WAIT ON 7-PIN OR 8-PIN
DEAL 8-PIN
IF THE 9-PIN SHOWS UP
FROM THIS SHAPE

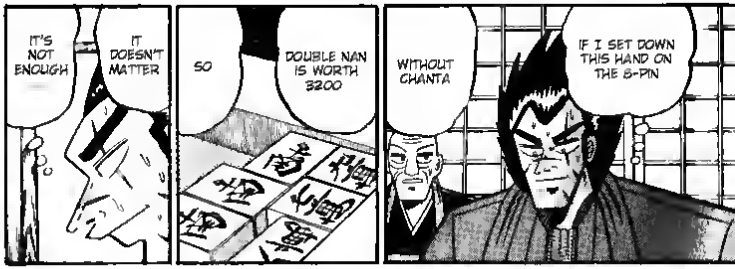

AND WAIT ON 7-PIN OR 8-PIN
DEAL 8-PIN
IF THE 9-PIN COMES AROUND
FROM THIS SHAPE

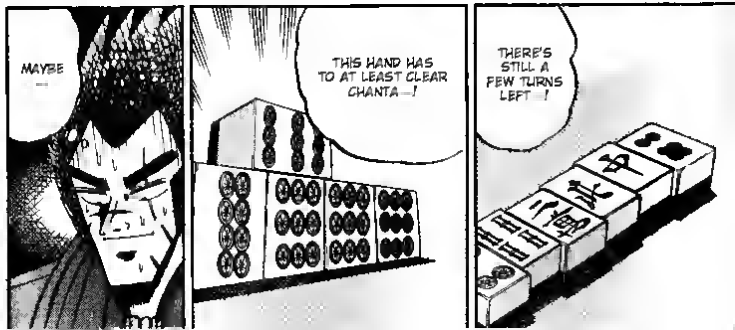
HARADA...!
PLAYING THE 8-PIN HERE RIGHT NOW
IN OTHER WORDS
BUT...
AN ACT OF SUICIDE...
A TILE THAT THERE'S A GREATER THAN 70% CHANCE HE'S WAITING ON IT IS...

HE'S CRAZY.
DEALT 8-PIN ...!
GH...
IT'S A TILE THAT COULD EXPLODE ON HIM ...!
AND OUTRAGEOUS
AFTER HARADA PLAYED HIS WINNING TILE, THE 8-PIN, TEN
BUT
BUT ...
I'LL RISK IGNORING THE 8-PIN...
IF IT WAS 7-PIN I'D WIN, BUT
PUTTING PRIORITY ON CLEAR MAHJONG ...!
HE DARED TO OVERLOOK IT.
HUH...?
IGNORED IT...!

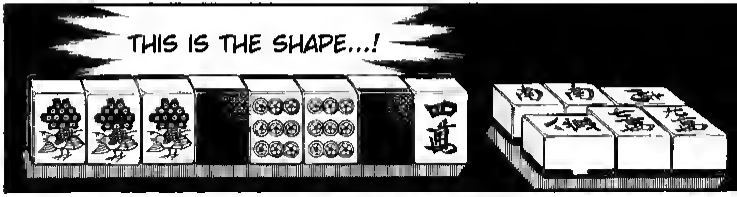

PRIORITY ON CLEAR YAKU...!

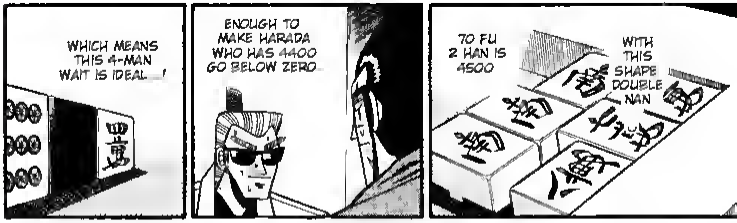
URGH -
KAN...!
TO MAKE HARADA GO BELOW ZERO -
BRING IT UP -!


IT'S NOT ENOUGH
IT DOESN'T MATTER
SO
DOUBLE NAN IS WORTH 3200
WITHOUT CHANTA
IF I SET DOWN THIS HAND ON THE 8-PIN

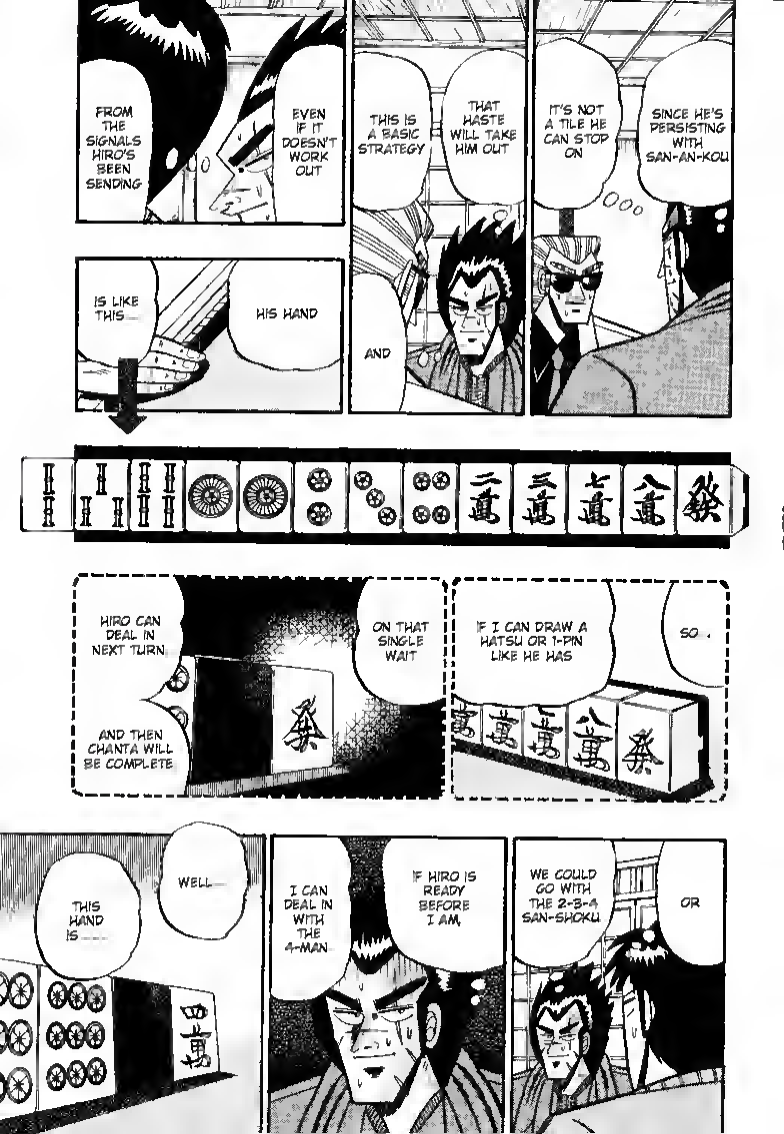

MAYBE -
THIS HAND HAS TO AT LEAST CLEAR CHANTA -!
THERE'S STILL A FEW TURNS LEFT -!

THROUGH THE NUMBER OF POINTS


THIS IS THE SHAPE...!

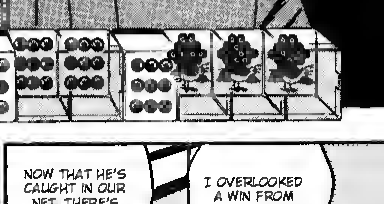

WHICH MEANS THIS 4-MAN WAIT IS IDEAL...!
ENOUGH TO MAKE HARADA WHO HAS 4400 GO BELOW ZERO
70 FU 2 HAN IS 4500
WITH THIS SHAPE DOUBLE NAN

EVEN IF HE WAS PLANNING TO FOLD COMPLETELY
"I GET THE FEELING IT'S CHANTA."
HE CAN'T STOP THE WHOLE
EVEN IF HARADA THINKS SOMETHING'S GOING ON
WITH THIS 4-MAN


FROM THE SIGNALS HIRO'S BEEN SENDING
EVEN IF IT DOESN'T WORK OUT
THIS IS A BASIC STRATEGY
THAT HASTE WILL TAKE HIM OUT
IT'S NOT A TILE HE CAN STOP ON
SINCE HE'S PERSISTING WITH SAN-AN-KOU
IS LIKE THIS—
HIS HAND
AND
HIRO CAN DEAL IN NEXT TURN
ON THAT SINGLE WAIT
AND THEN CHANTA WILL BE COMPLETE
IF I CAN DRAW A HATSU OR 1-PIN LIKE HE HAS
SO .
THIS HAND IS——
WELL—
I CAN DEAL IN WITH THE 4-MAN
IF HIRO IS READY BEFORE I AM,
WE COULD GO WITH THE 2-3-4 SAN-SHOKU
OR

I CAN DEAL WITH WHATEVER COMES UP .....!
ALL SET .....
WHICHEVER WAY IT GOES

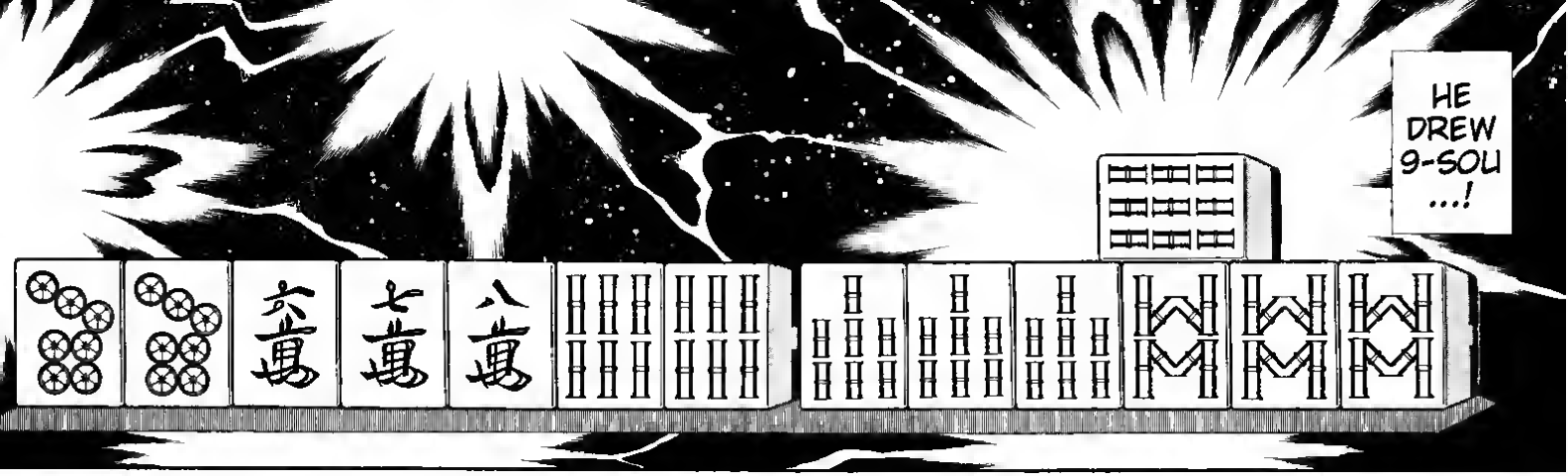
WAS JUST EXTENDING HIS LIFE A LITTLE BIT LONGER
PASSING ON THAT WIN EARLIER
THIS TIME I'LL TAKE HIM OUT

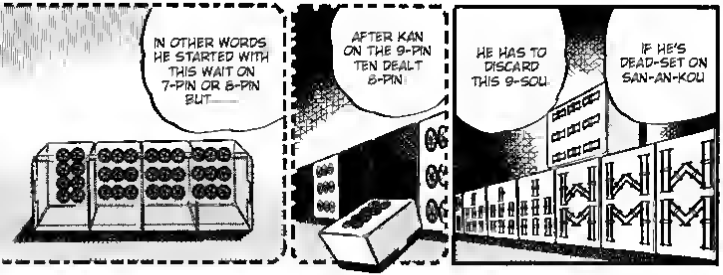

NOW THAT HE'S CAUGHT IN OUR NET THERE'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT
I OVERLOOKED A WIN FROM HARADA ONCE BUT
NO PROBLEMS AT ALL

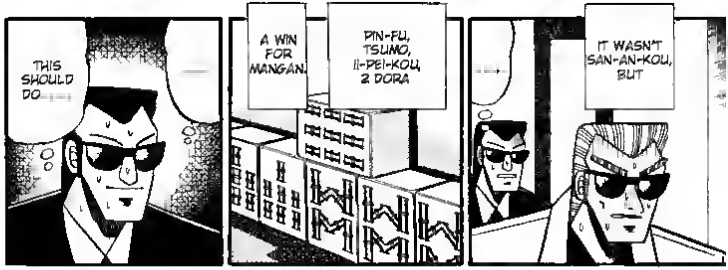
MORON ...!
.....

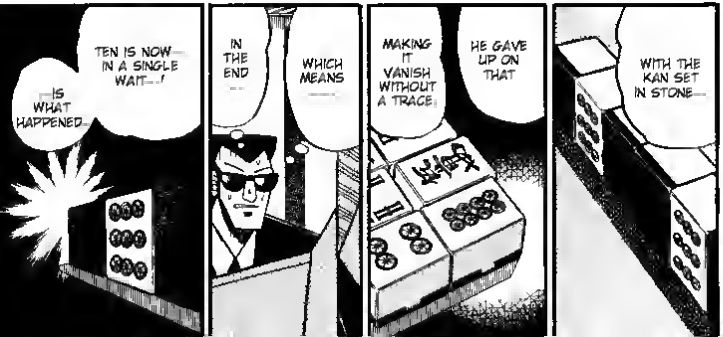
WITH A BETTER SETUP ...!

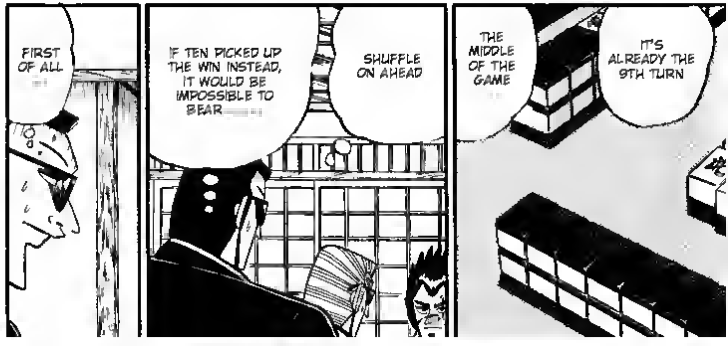
IT FEELS LIKE HE'S JUST SCREWING AROUND
KAN ON 9-PIN
AND PLAYING 8-PIN MEANS
THAT STUPID LITTLE GAME OF YOURS...
I'LL MAKE YOU REGRET
CHEAP-ASS CALCULATIONS
HE PASSED ON THE 8-PIN I DISCARDED.
KH...!
COME ON... 7-PIN...!


HE DREW 9-SOU ...!


IN OTHER WORDS HE STARTED WITH THIS WAIT ON 7-PIN OR 8-PIN BUT——
AFTER KAN ON THE 9-PIN TEN DEALT 8-PIN!
HE HAS TO DISCARD THIS 9-SOU.
IF HE'S DEAD-SET ON SAN-AN-KOU

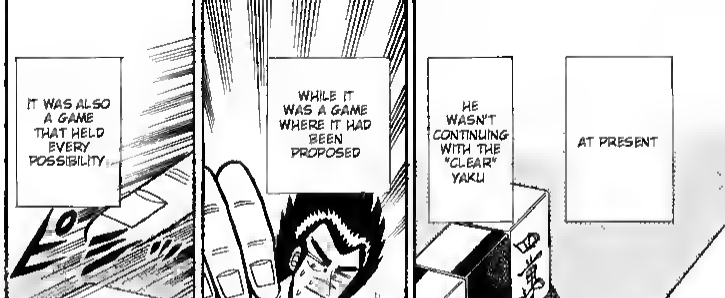

THIS SHOULD DO——
A WIN FOR MANGAN.
PIN-FU, TSUMO, II-PEI-KOU, 2 DORA
IT WASN'T SAN-AN-KOU, BUT

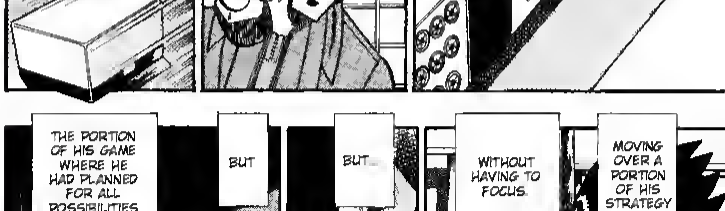

IS WHAT HAPPENED——
TEN IS NOW IN A SINGLE WAIT——!
IN THE END——
WHICH MEANS——
MAKING IT VANISH WITHOUT A TRACE.
HE GAVE UP ON THAT
WITH THE KAN SET IN STONE——


FIRST OF ALL——
IF TEN PICKED UP THE WIN INSTEAD, IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO BEAR——
SHUFFLE ON AHEAD
THE MIDDLE OF THE GAME——
IT'S ALREADY THE 9TH TURN

IN THAT CASE...
WITH TEN AIMING FOR CHANTA
HE CAN'T DISCARD 9-SOU...
HE SHOULDN'T PLAY IT...
IF HE DOES IT'S UTTER SUICIDE...
THE SAME KIND OF THING AS THE 8-PIN EARLIER...
IT'S MADNESS...
AGAIN...
GH...!

THEY'RE SIMPLY IGNORING WINNING HANDS
THIS ISN'T A NORMAL GAME OF MAHJONG ANYMORE
THE REJECTION OF THE TSUMO WIN AND PLAYING THE 9-SOU
THE 8-PIN THAT TEN OVERLOOKED EARLIER
THE PROPOSITION OF "CLEAR" MAHJONG...
THAT PROPOSITION HAS PRIORITY
ABOVE ALL ELSE...
TEN, WITH CHANTA...
HARADA WITH HIS SAN-AN-KOU
THIS TIME
IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN FOR HARADA
BUT TEN HAD ALREADY TURNED IN ANOTHER DIRECTION WHEN HE PLAYED THE 8-PIN.
IN FACT, IT WAS A BIT DIFFERENT...
NO...!
ON THAT FOR NOW...
THE TWO OF THEM ARE JUST PLACING THEIR PRIORITIES


IT WAS ALSO A GAME THAT HELD EVERY POSSIBILITY...
WHILE IT WAS A GAME WHERE IT HAD BEEN PROPOSED
HE WASN'T CONTINUING WITH THE "CLEAR" YAKU
AT PRESENT

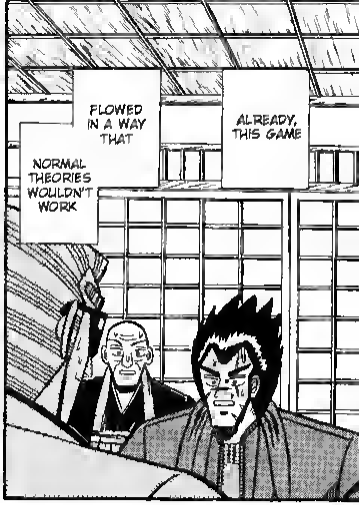

THE PORTION OF HIS GAME WHERE HE HAD PLANNED FOR ALL POSSIBILITIES
BUT
BUT...
WITHOUT HAVING TO FOCUS.
MOVING OVER A PORTION OF HIS STRATEGY

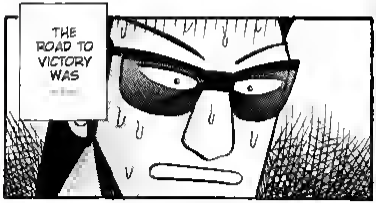
RIGHT AFTER THAT
HE WOULD HAVE WON
IF HE'D AIMED FOR STRAIGHT-ON CHANTA
HE DREW THE 7-PIN ....!
BACK-FIRED!

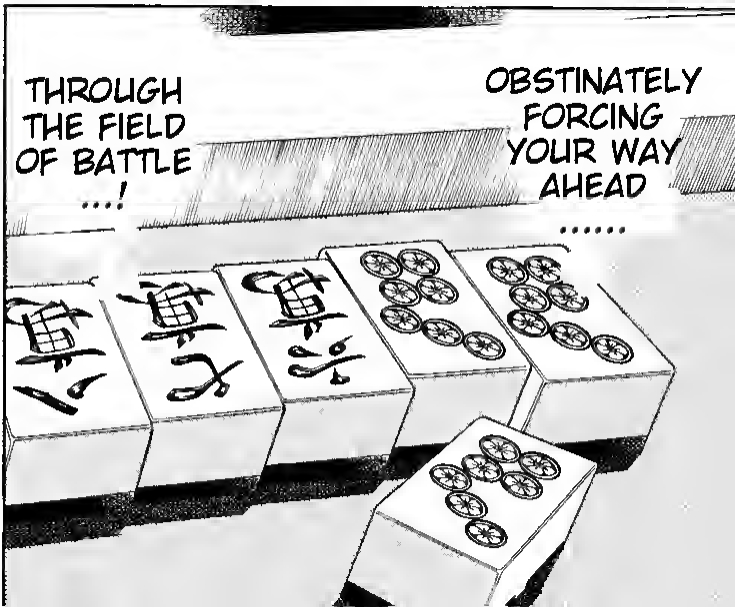
ABANDONED TEN, WHO HAD BEEN FOLLOWING REASON
FATE
AND SENT THE SAN-AN-KOU HE PRAYED FOR
TILTED
THE DANGEROUS BALANCE OF THE GAME
THE SPACE BETWEEN THEM THAT HAD BEEN PRESERVED
TO HARADA ...!
URGH...!

TSUMO.
TAN-YAO, 2 DORA ....
SAN-AN-KOU ...!
URGH ...
KH...
TEN, WHO THOUGHT HE HAD EXHAUSTED EVERY POSSIBILITY
LOST.
THAT'S CRAZY ...!
HARADA WON.
HIS PERSISTANCE PAID OFF

IT DISTORTED TIME AND SPACE
IN SHORT, REASON WOULD NOT WIN


ALREADY, THIS GAME FLOWED IN A WAY THAT NORMAL THEORIES WOULDN'T WORK


THE ROAD TO VICTORY WAS


THROUGH THE FIELD OF BATTLE ...!
OBSTINATELY FORCING YOUR WAY AHEAD .....

CHAPTER 98
WISDOM

ざわ・・
ざわ・・
.....
9TH TURN
THREW AWAY TENPAI FOR SAN-SHOKU II-PEI-KOU
HARADA ON THE 4TH TURN
PRAYING FOR SAN-AN-KOU WITH EVERY FIBER OF HIS BODY
GIVING UP EVERYTHING EXCEPT SAN-AN-KOU
PIN-FU, TSUMO II-PEI-KOU, 2 DORA
THREW AWAY A WIN WITH
WAS FINISHED BY WEST !
THE MOST DIFFICULT HURDLE IN CLEAR MAHJONG
WITH AN IRON ARM THAT TWISTED PROBABILITY AND REASON TO THE GROUND
HARADA WAS THE ONE WHO COMPLETED IT
SAN-AN-KOU COMPLETED .....!

HE COMPLETED IT .....!

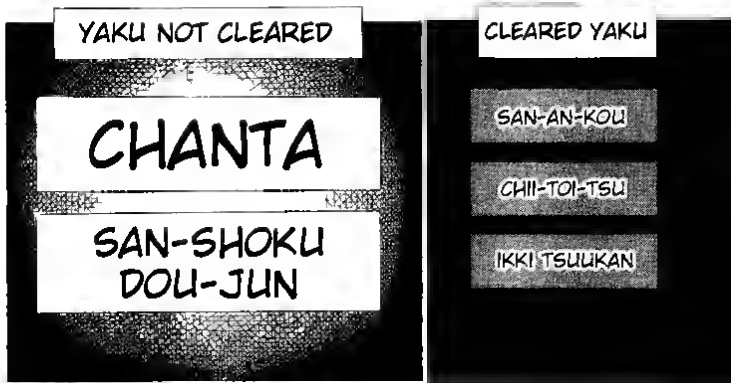
WAS BLOWN AWAY.
THE SUPERIOR POSITION EAST HAD BEFORE THIS TURN
WEST AND EAST'S POSITIONS WERE REVERSED ...!
AND EVEN BETTER
HIS WISH WAS GRANT-ED
.....
.....

HEH HEH...
SAVED FROM DEFEAT .....
WEST WAS IN AN OVERWHELMINGLY SUPERIOR POSITION...!
ガラ ガラ..
AND IT WAS A SAN-AN-KOU WORTH A GOOD NUMBER OF POINTS
AT THIS POINT IN TIME, THE SITUATION OF BOTH CAMPS WAS LIKE SO.
NEXT PAGE
OF A SITUATION WHERE THERE WAS NO ROOM FOR ERROR.
AL-RE-DY ON THE BRINK
WE'VE GOT YOU TRAPPED
NOW...
HEH HEH HEH
EAST WAS STRUG-GLING.
YES.

WEST CAMP
SOGA
35600
HARADA
16400

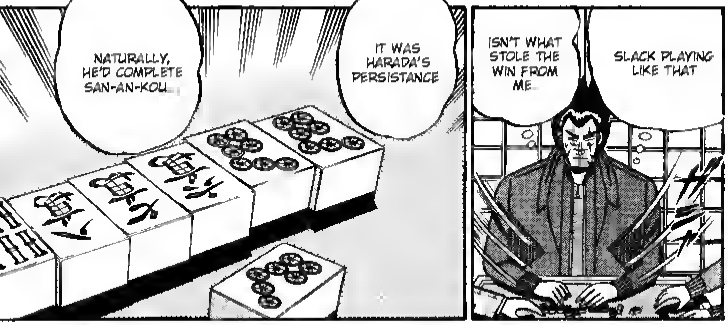
YAKU NOT CLEARED
SAN-SHOKU DOU-JUN
CLEARED YAKU
CHANTA
CHIITOITSU
IKKI TSUUKAN
SAN-AN-KOU

EAST CAMP
TEN
36700
HIROYUKI
11300

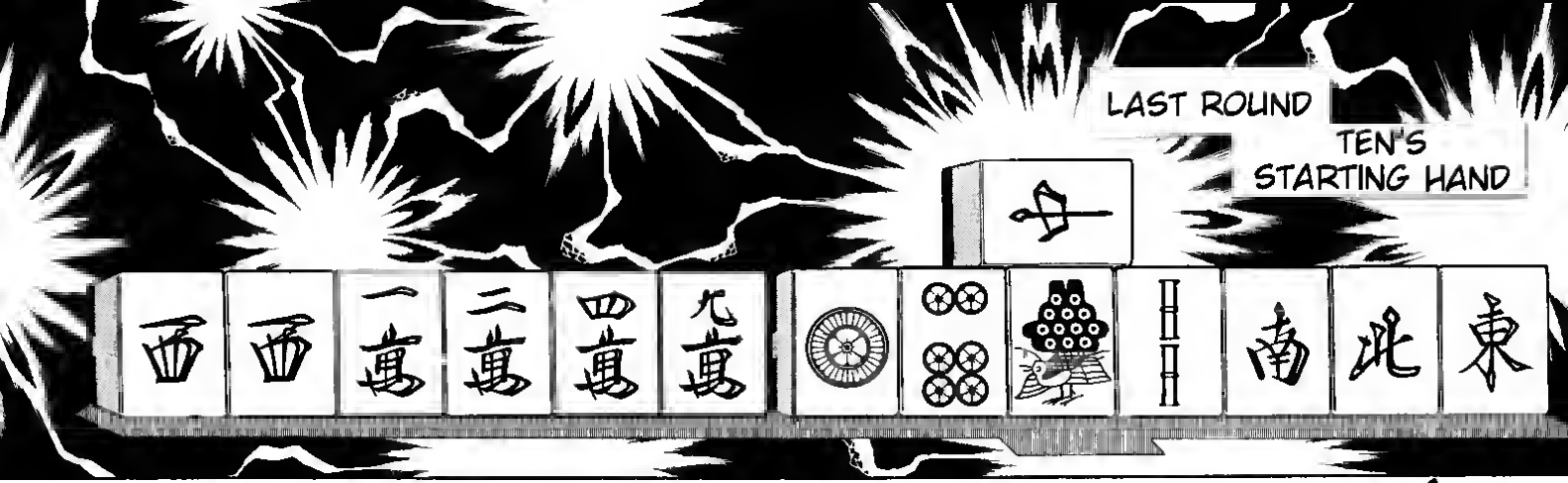

YAKU NOT CLEARED
CHANTA
SAN-SHOKU DOU-JUN
CLEARED YAKU
SAN-AN-KOU
CHII-TOI-TSU
IKKI TSUUKAN

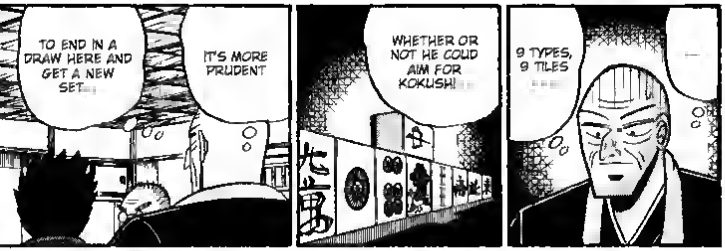
.....
WHAT A MESS !
EARLIER, I...
I ENDED UP PLAYING BADLY
IN THE END
I PLANNED TO COVER EVERY POSSIBILITY, BUT
I PLANNED TO ACT WISELY

THAT'S THE KIND OF STUPID MAHJONG I ENDED UP PLAYING
JUST WAITING FOR MY OPPONENT TO FALL IN...
A NUMBER OF PITFALLS AHEAD
I HAD ONLY SET A TRAP


NATURALLY, HE'D COMPLETE SAN-AN-KOU...
IT WAS HARADA'S PERSISTANCE
ISN'T WHAT STOLE THE WIN FROM ME...
SLACK PLAYING LIKE THAT

BY WAITING FOR AN OPPONENT'S MISTAKES...!
A PATH WON'T OPEN TO YOU
YOU WON'T WIN...
WITHOUT THE DRIVE TO STEAL IT AWAY
SINCE IT WAS A FIERCE COMPETITION...
EITHER ONE COULD HAVE "WON"
STILL...


LAST ROUND
TEN'S STARTING HAND

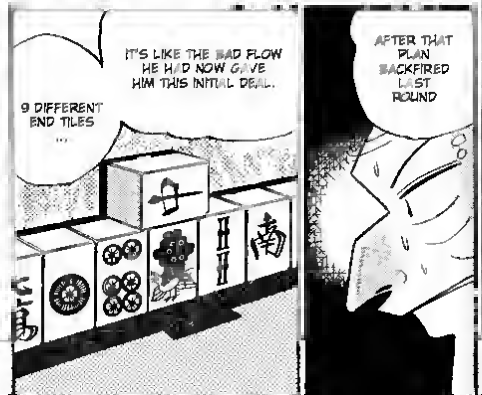

TO END IN A DRAW HERE AND GET A NEW SET...
IT'S MORE PRUDENT

WHETHER OR NOT HE COULD AIM FOR KOKUSHI...

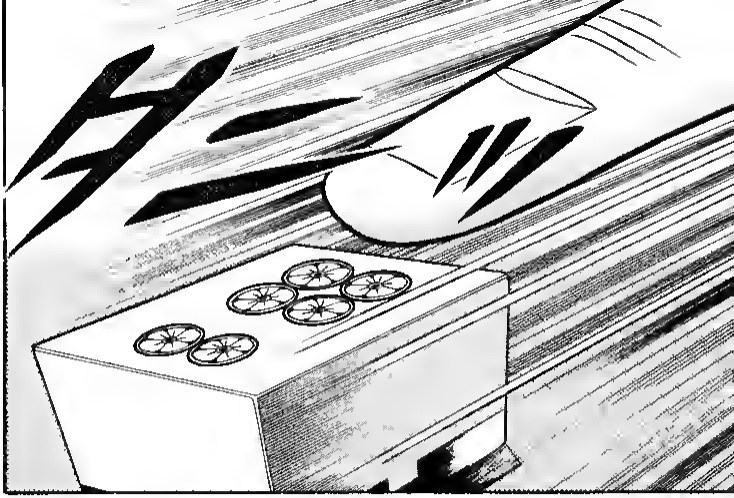
9 TYPES, 9 TILES

HUH...?
BUT...
TEN
A HAND TO BREAK THE FLOW WOULD BE BEST, I GUESS ...?
ONCE IT'S THIS BAD

THAT'S THE WORST STARTING HAND...


9 DIFFERENT END TILES ...
IT'S LIKE THE BAD FLOW HE HAD NOW GAVE HIM THIS INITIAL DEAL.

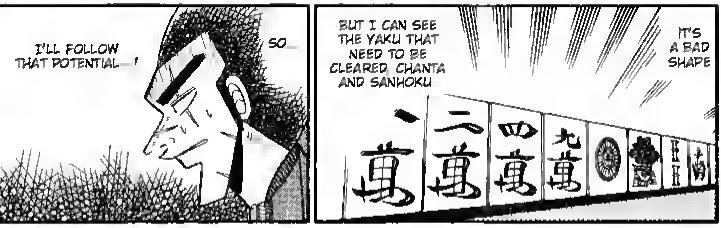
AFTER THAT PLAN BACKFIRED LAST ROUND



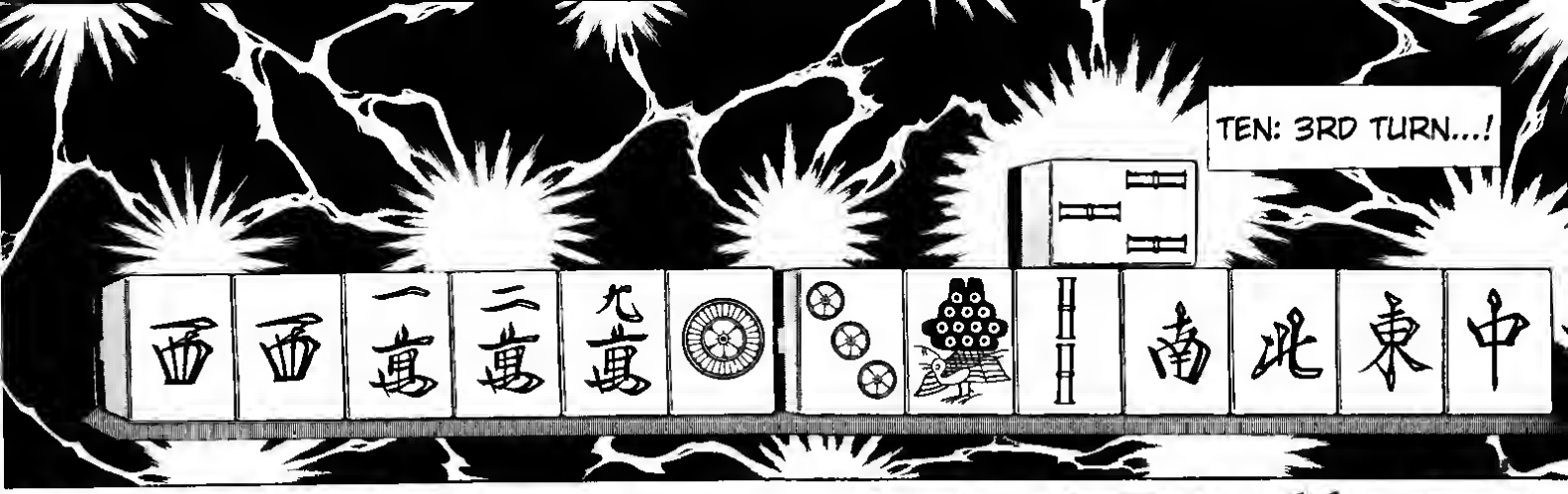
STARTING THE GAME...!
FORWARD
NOT A DRAW...!
URGH...!

...
HE DOESN'T HAVE TO KEEP GOING...
THIS IS THE WORST HAND HE COULD GET.
WHY...?

WHAT THAT "WIN" STOLE AWAY...

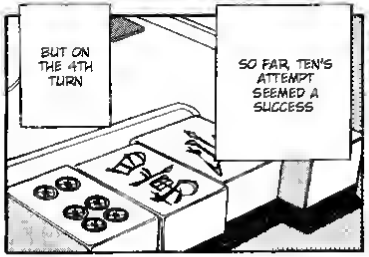

I'LL FOLLOW THAT POTENTIAL!
SO
BUT I CAN SEE THE YAKU THAT NEED TO BE CLEARED: CHANTA AND SANHOKU
IT'S A BAD SHAPE

FORWARD!
NOW, ROLLING ON...
THINKING LIKE THAT WON'T GET ME THE WIN
IT'S A WISE DECISION TO END THE ROUND IN A DRAW WITH NINE TYPES OF NINE TILES
BUT THAT ONLY TAKES ME BACK-WARDS
FORWARD!


TEN: 3RD TURN...!

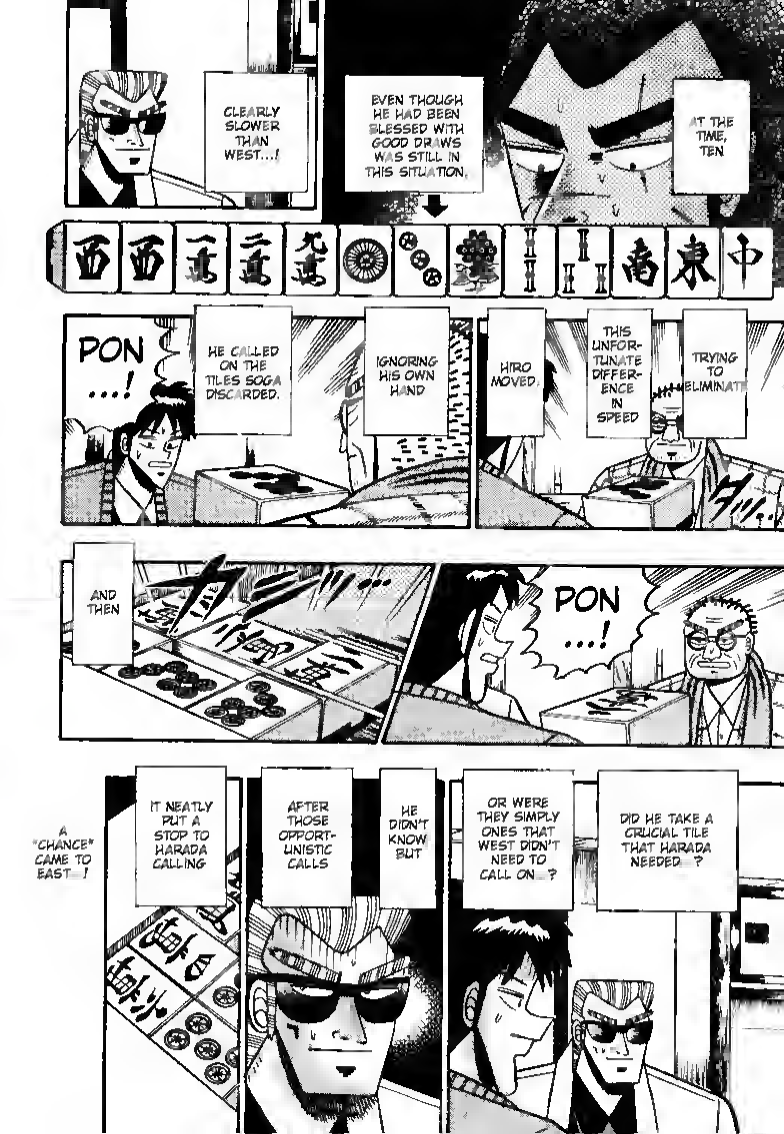
ONLY ONE YAKU THAT HADN'T BEEN CLEARED
TWO GROUPS REVEALED IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE.
CALLED ON SOGA'S TILES AGAIN AND AGAIN.
CHII ...!

THAT WOULD EASILY SETTLE THINGS HERE.
IF SOGA DEALT INTO HARADA'S HAND NEXT TURN
.....
KH...
TENPAI ...?
A GOOD CHANCE HE HAD SAN-SHOKU DOU-JUN.

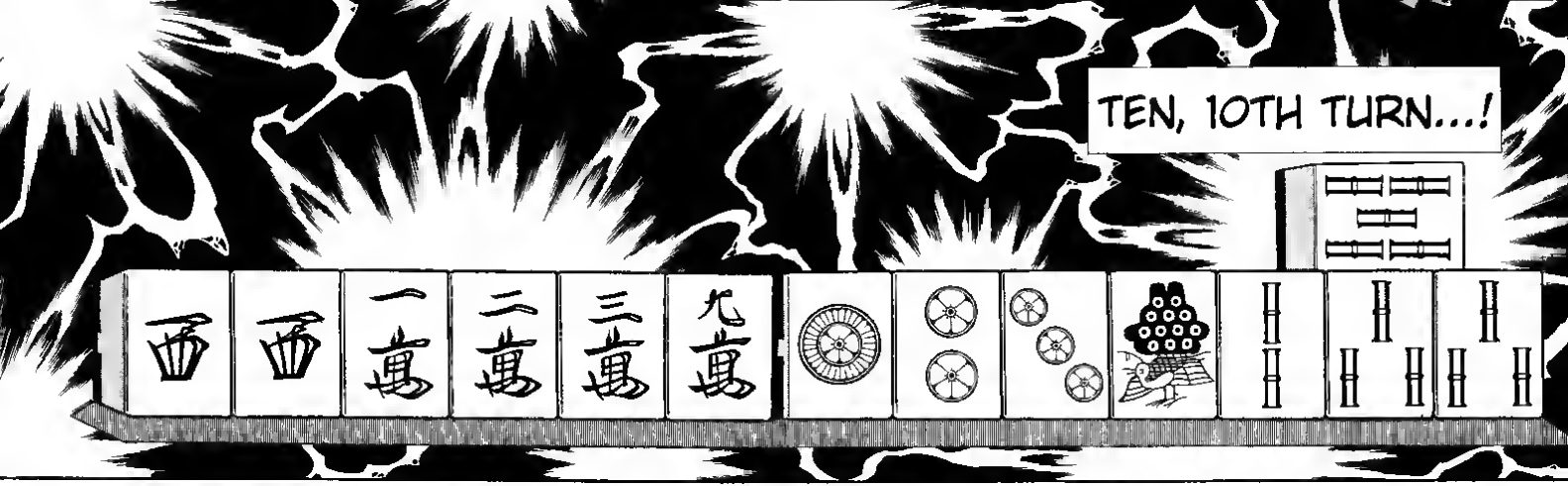

BUT ON THE 4TH TURN
SO FAR, TEN'S ATTEMPT SEEMED A SUCCESS

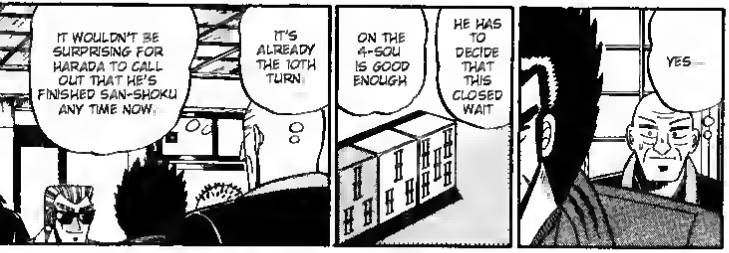
GOOD DRAWS

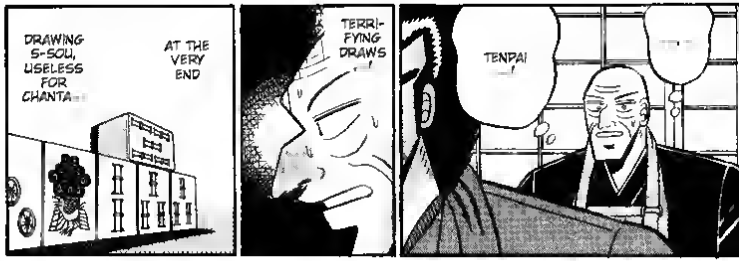
WEST, HARADA
CHII ...!

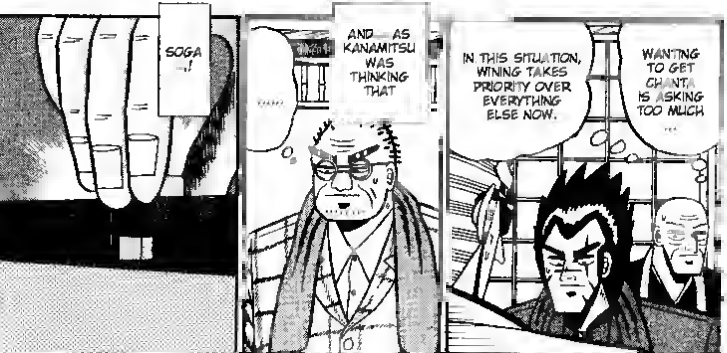

CLEARLY SLOWER THAN WEST...!
EVEN THOUGH HE HAD BEEN BLESSED WITH GOOD DRAWS WAS STILL IN THIS SITUATION.
AT THE TIME, TEN
PON ...!
HE CALLED ON THE TILES SOGA DISCARDED.
IGNORING HIS OWN HAND
HIRO MOVED.
THIS UNFORTUNATE DIFFERENCE IN SPEED
TRYING TO ELIMINATE
AND THEN
PON ...!
A "CHANCE" CAME TO EAST...!
IT NEATLY PUT A STOP TO HARADA CALLING
AFTER THOSE OPPORTUNISTIC CALLS
HE DIDN'T KNOW BUT
OR WERE THEY SIMPLY ONES THAT WEST DIDN'T NEED TO CALL ON...?
DID HE TAKE A CRUCIAL TILE THAT HARADA NEEDED...?

THE DELAY NEEDED TO MAKE HIS HAND
AND TEN MADE USE OF
THIS CHANCE!
AS IF IN RESPONSE TO HIRO'S DEDICATION
DRAW IT...!
JUST AS IF DRIVEN FORWARD BY A SINGLE WILL
THIS OBVIOUSLY GARBAGE HAND UNIFIED
DRAW IT...!
TO CHANTA SAN-SHOKU!
STRAIGHT AHEAD


TEN, 10TH TURN...!

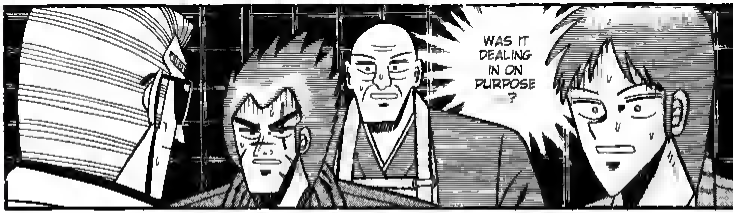

IT WOULDN'T BE SURPRISING FOR HARADA TO CALL OUT THAT HE'S FINISHED SAN-SHOKU ANY TIME NOW.
IT'S ALREADY THE 10TH TURN.
ON THE 4-SOU IS GOOD ENOUGH
HE HAS TO DECIDE THAT THIS CLOSED WAIT
YES...

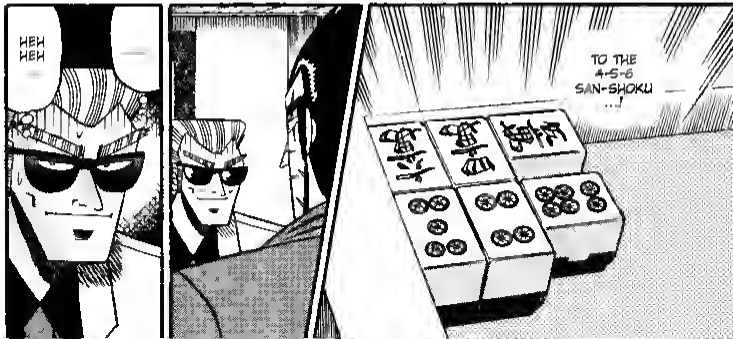

DRAWING 5-SOU, USELESS FOR CHANTA...
AT THE VERY END
TERRI-FYING DRAWS...!
TENPAI...!


SOGA...!
AND... AS KANAMITSU WAS THINKING THAT
IN THIS SITUATION, WINNING TAKES PRIORITY OVER EVERYTHING ELSE NOW.
WANTING TO GET CHANTA IS ASKING TOO MUCH...

FOR NOW... THIS SHOULD BE GOOD ENOUGH
HE'S GOT TENPAI FOR SAN-SHOKU, 1 DORA, BUT...

URGH ...!
DEALT 5-SOU FROM HIS HAND ...!


WAS IT DEALING IN ON PURPOSE ?


HEH HEH
TO THE 4-5-6 SAN-SHOKU ...!

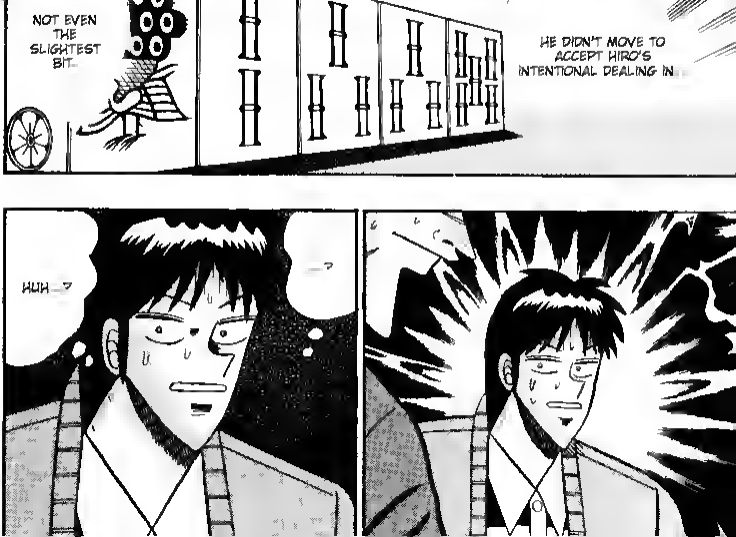
ス…
BUT…
WE MADE IT…
WHICH MEANS HE DOESN'T HAVE ANY GUARANTEES
HARADA DIDN'T GET TSUMO WITH THE NEXT DRAW
MAYBE ONE TURN
THERE REALLY ISN'T ANY TIME LEFT
CLOSED WAIT ON 4-SOU…!
TEN'S WAIT…!
I HAVE TO DRAW IT…
SHIT…!

URGH ...!

.....
4-SOU
...!
PHEW~
.....
.....
.....
FOR NOW
.....
THE DRAW THAT WILL SAVE US FROM DEFEAT ...!
.....
WE MADE IT.
DANGER...
ESCAPE BY DEALING INTO TEN'S HAND
AVOID IT ...!

DIDN'T MOVE ...!

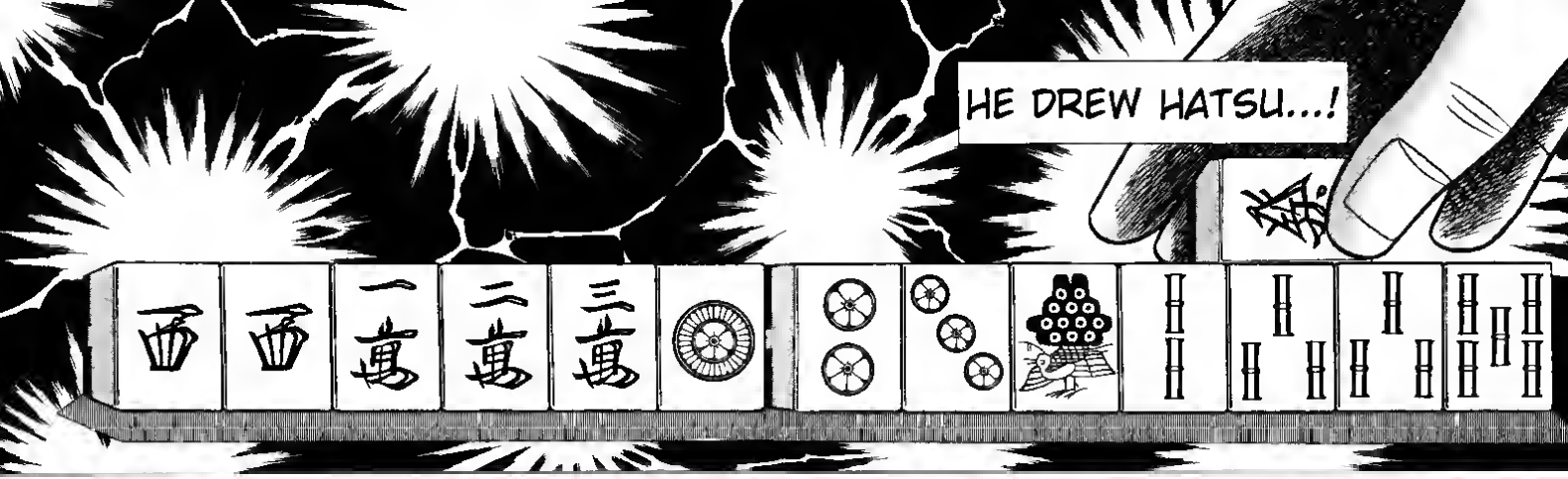
NOT EVEN THE SLIGHTEST BIT...
HE DIDN'T MOVE TO ACCEPT HIRO'S INTENTIONAL DEALING IN...

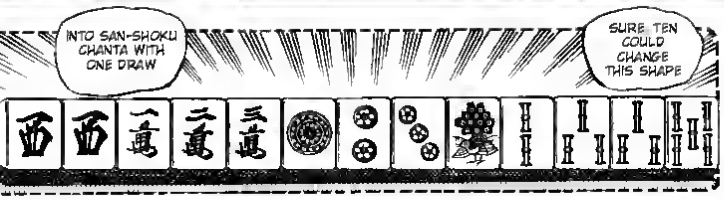

HUH...?
...?

CHAPTER 99
WRONGNESS

ざわ…
ざわ…
HARADA FROM WEST...
TO MY DEALING IN ...?
WHY ISN'T HE RESPONDING
THAT'S CRAZY ...
THIS NEEDS TO BE SETTLED NOW...
WE CAN'T KEEP ON WAITING AROUND
HE CALLED TWICE FOR SAN-SHOKU.
ONLY HAD ONE YAKU FOR CLEAR MAHJONG LEFT.

EAST'S "DEFEAT" WILL BE SETTLED.....!
IN THAT INSTANT
IF HE DOES
NATURALLY HE'LL HAVE SAN-SHOKU.
EVEN NEXT TURN, HARADA MIGHT LAY DOWN HIS HAND...
BUT
TEN
HE SHOULD HAVE TO TAKE IT!
OVERLOOKING THIS 4-SOU IS
UNBELIE-VABLE
WHEN YOU CONSIDER THE SITUATION WE'RE IN
DIDN'T CARE, AND DREW!
HUH ..?

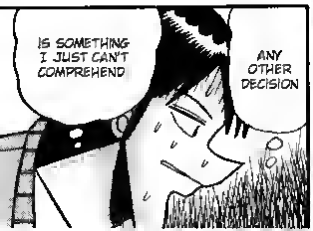

HE DREW HATSU...!


INTO SAN-SHOKU CHANTA WITH ONE DRAW
SURE. TEN COULD CHANGE THIS SHAPE

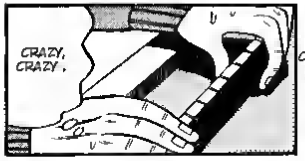
FOR SURE
HE SHOULD WIN WITH SAN-SHOKU

HOW HE FEELS, BUT
IT'S NOT LIKE I DON'T UNDERSTAND
WHEN YOU CONSIDER THE REALITY OF THE DANGER THAT HARADA WILL WIN

THE REMAINING CLEAR YAKU, SAN-SHOKU AND CHANTA AT ONE TIME.
A CHANCE TO COMPLETE
SO


IS SOMETHING I JUST CAN'T COMPREHEND
ANY OTHER DECISION

HE DISCARDED IT RIGHT AFTER DRAWING!


CRAZY, CRAZY.

WHY...?
WHY WON'T HE WIN...?

IT'S CRAZY!
GA...

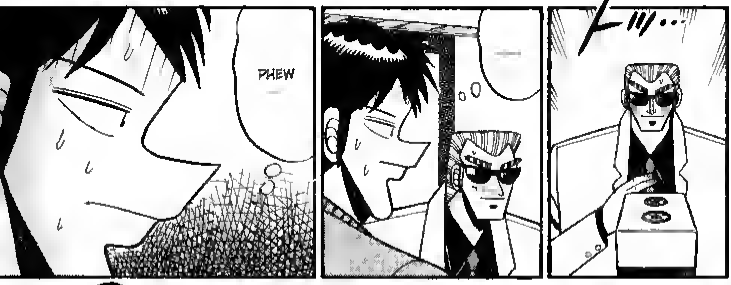
A TILE THAT YOU COULDN'T SAY IS USEFUL.

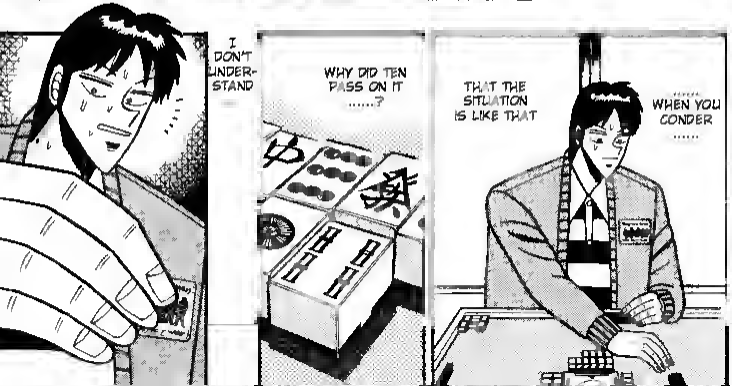
THEY MIGHT TAKE OUR LIVES..!
IN THAT ONE TURN DELAY
BECAUSE

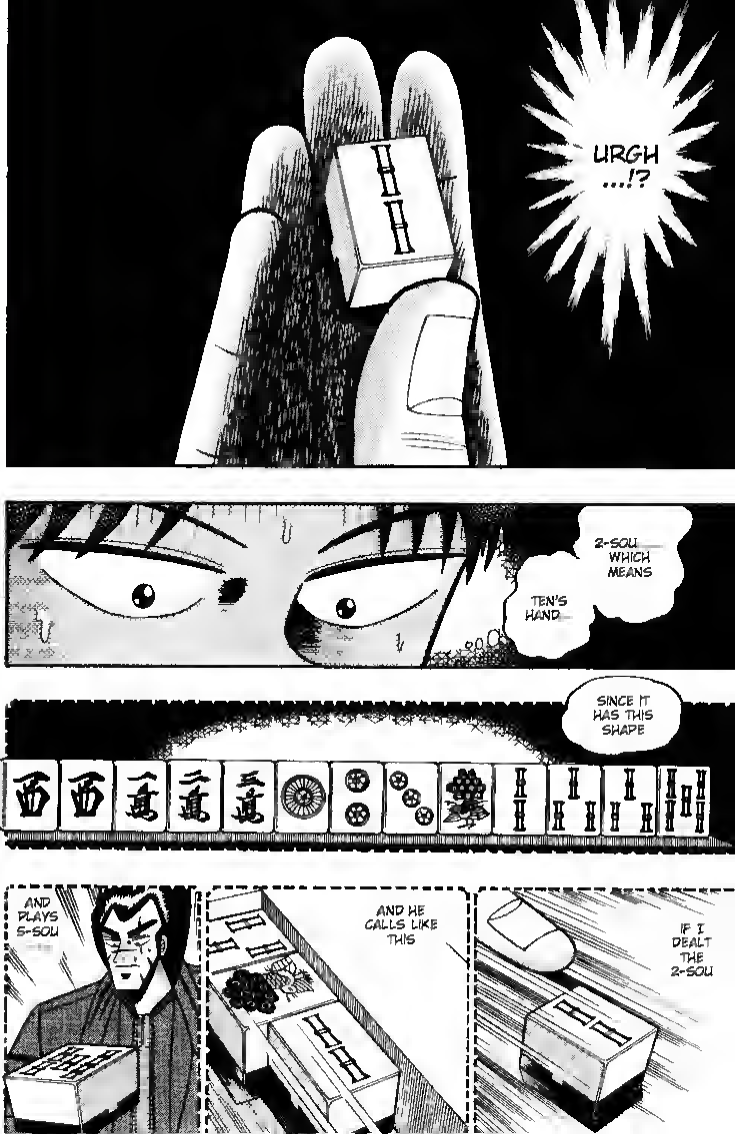
MAYBE SOGA WILL DEAL INTO HARADA'S HAND
NOW...

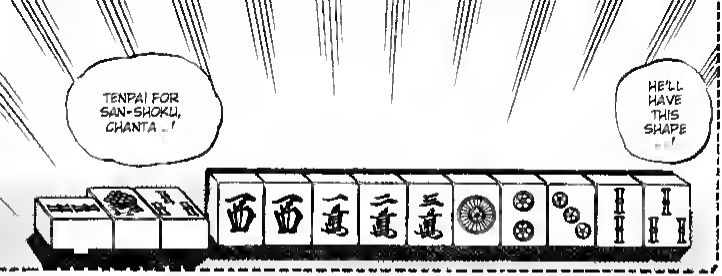
NOW, HERE
OR

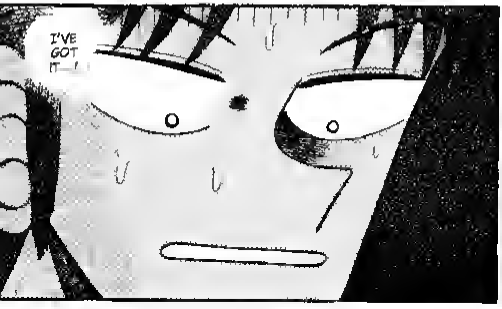
MAYBE HARADA WILL TSUMO .....!?

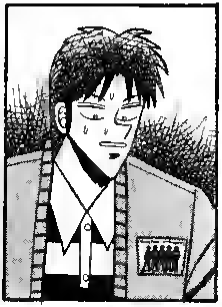

PHEW
ﾄﾝ...


I DON'T UNDER-STAND
WHY DID TEN PASS ON IT .....?
THAT THE SITUATION IS LIKE THAT
.....WHEN YOU CONDER .....

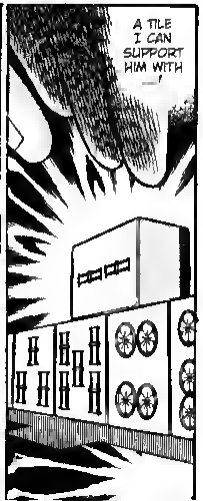

URGH ...!?
2-SOU WHICH MEANS
TEN'S HAND
SINCE IT HAS THIS SHAPE
AND PLAYS 5-SOU
AND HE CALLS LIKE THIS
IF I DEALT THE 2-SOU


TENPAI FOR SAN-SHOKU, CHANTA...!
HE'LL HAVE THIS SHAPE...!

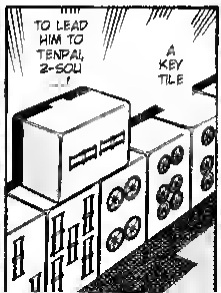

I'VE GOT IT...!



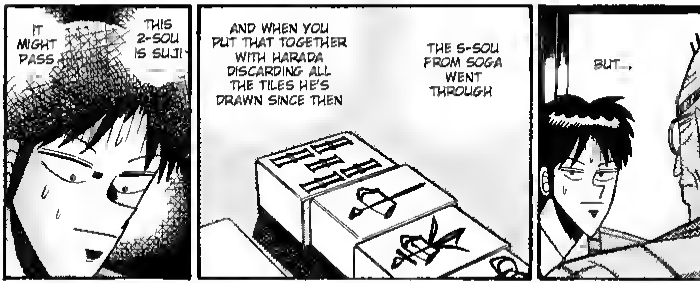
SAN-SHOKU CHANTA
WHAT TEN HAS HIS EYES ON

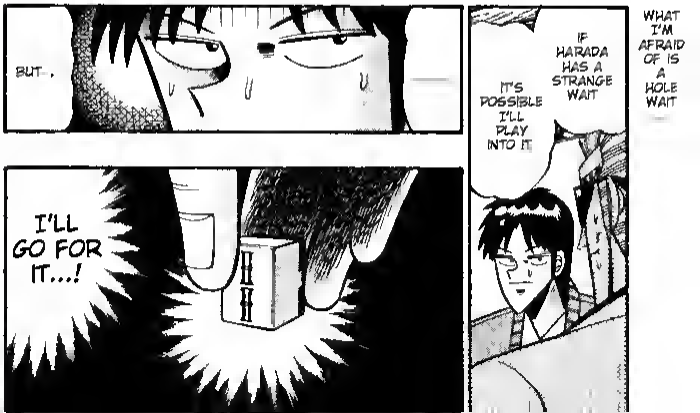

A TILE I CAN SUPPORT HIM WITH...!

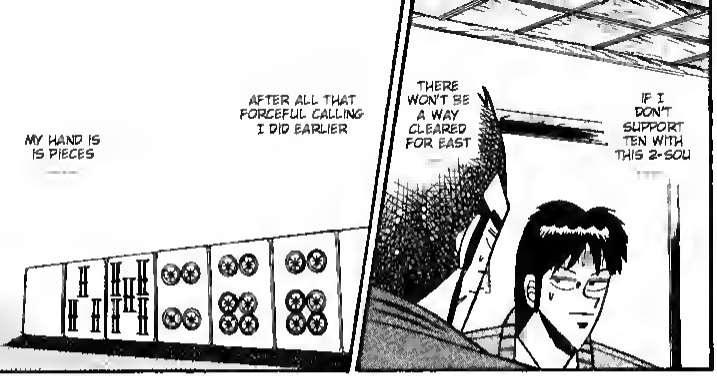
TEN'S GOOD LUCK, TOO...?
IS THIS

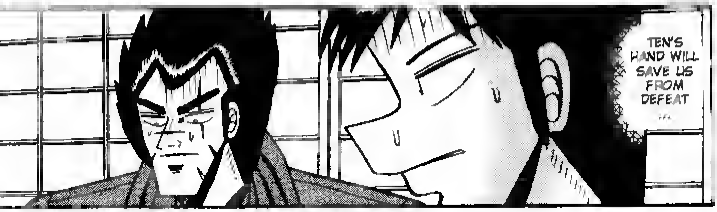

TO LEAD HIM TO TENPAI, 2-SOU...!
A KEY TILE

I DON'T WANT TO DISCARD THIS 2-SOU...
IT FEELS LIKE HE'S WAITING FOR IT
FROM LOOKING AT HARADA'S DISCARDS
BUT...


IT MIGHT PASS...
THIS 2-SOU IS SUJI
AND WHEN YOU PUT THAT TOGETHER WITH HARADA DISCARDING ALL THE TILES HE'S DRAWN SINCE THEN
THE 5-SOU FROM SOGA WENT THROUGH
BUT...

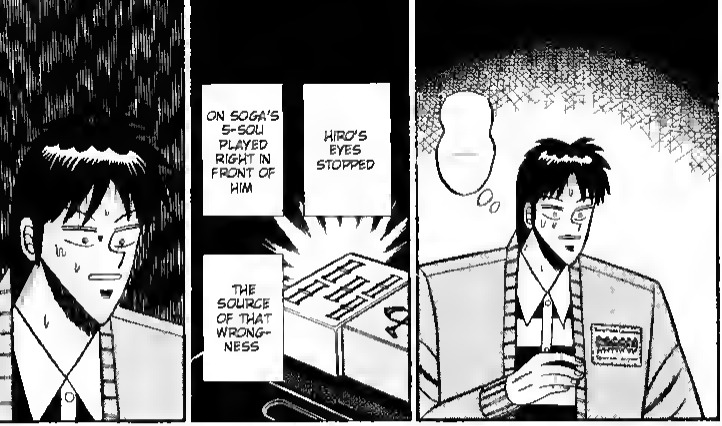

BUT...
I'LL GO FOR IT...!
IT'S POSSIBLE I'LL PLAY INTO IT
IF HARADA HAS A STRANGE WAIT
WHAT I'M AFRAID OF IS A HOLE WAIT

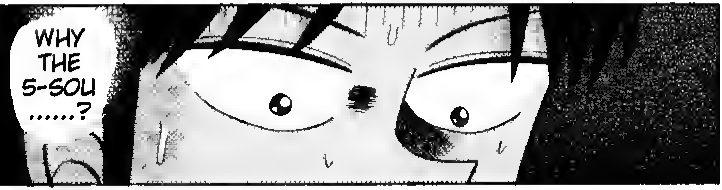

MY HAND IS IS PIECES
AFTER ALL THAT FORCEFUL CALLING I DID EARLIER
THERE WON'T BE A WAY CLEARED FOR EAST
IF I DON'T SUPPORT TEN WITH THIS 2-SOU


TEN'S HAND WILL SAVE US FROM DEFEAT ...

IN THAT INSTANT .....!
WAS ABOUT TO PLAY THE 2-SOU ...
ON THAT DECISION
HIROYUKI
THE ONLY THING WE CAN BET ON IS CHANTA SAN-SHOKU ...!

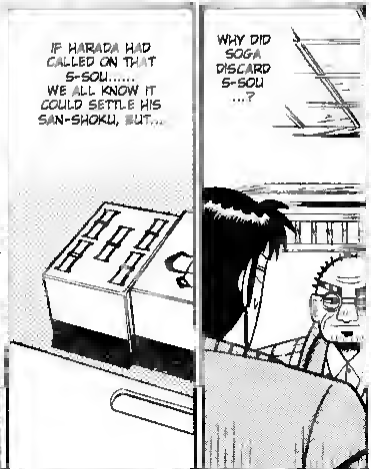
SOME-
THING
FELT
WRONG
...!
RAN
THROUGH
HIS
BODY...
THAT
COLD
CHILL
IT WAS
HARD TO
SAY WHY


ON SOGA'S 5-SOU PLAYED RIGHT IN FRONT OF HIM
HIRO'S EYES STOPPED
THE SOURCE OF THAT WRONG-NESS


WHY THE 5-SOU .....?

IT WASN'T SUPPORT OR ANYTHING...
HARADA DIDN'T CALL

WHY DID HE DISCARD THE 5-SOU...?
THEN

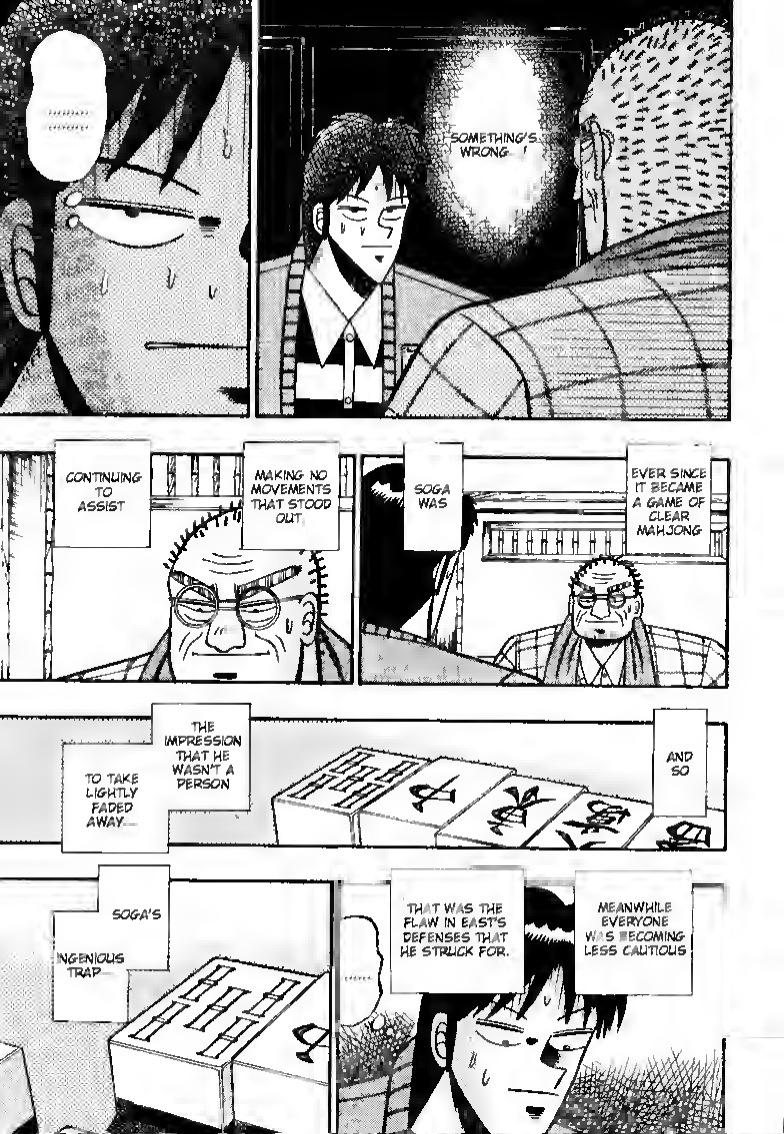

IF HARADA HAD CALLED ON THAT 5-SOU..... WE ALL KNOW IT COULD SETTLE HIS SAN-SHOKU, BUT...
WHY DID SOGA DISCARD 5-SOU ...?

TEN AND I MIGHT STILL BE STRUGGLING
IF HE HADN'T DISCARDED IT AHEAD OF TIME
HE WOULDN'T DISCARD IT FOR NOTHING
5-SOU IS A KEY TILE FOR HARADA'S SAN-SHOKU

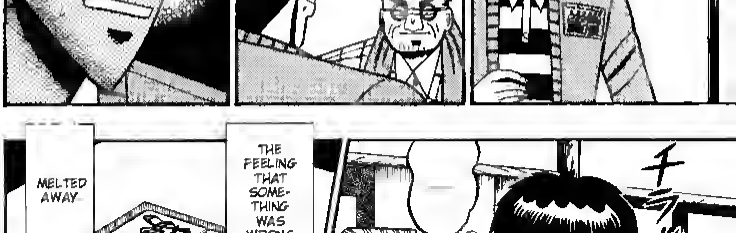
THE 5-SOU WILL BE IN THE WAY
IF TEN DRAWS WHAT HE WANTS FOR HIS HAND
IN FACT

THIS 5-SOU WOULD BE HARD TO DISCARD
IF SOGA HADN'T PUT OUT THE 5-SOU

SOGA WOULD PLAY IN A WAY THAT MAKES IT EASIER FOR EAST.
THERE'S NO WAY
SOME-THING'S WRONG!


.....
.....
SOMETHING'S WRONG...!
CONTINUING TO ASSIST
MAKING NO MOVEMENTS THAT STOOD OUT
SOGA WAS
EVER SINCE IT BECAME A GAME OF CLEAR MAHJONG
TO TAKE LIGHTLY FADED AWAY...
THE IMPRESSION THAT HE WASN'T A PERSON
AND SO
SOGA'S
INGENIOUS TRAP...
THAT WAS THE FLAW IN EAST'S DEFENSES THAT HE STRUCK FOR.
MEANWHILE EVERYONE WAS BECOMING LESS CAUTIOUS

FINALLY REACHED A CONCLUSION ...!
URGH .....
AT THE END OF HIS TRAIN OF THOUGHT
HIRO
THAT STRATEGY OF WEST'S

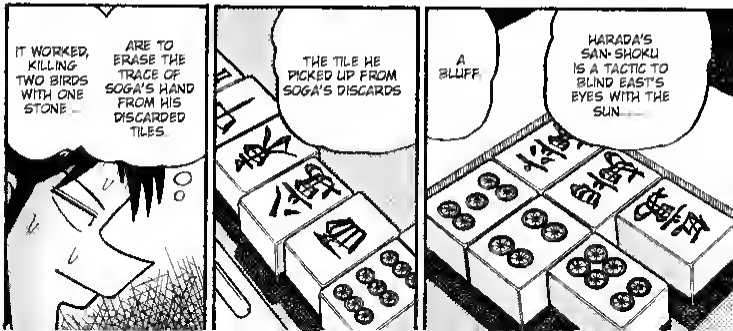

MELTED AWAY
THE FEELING THAT SOME-THING WAS WRONG

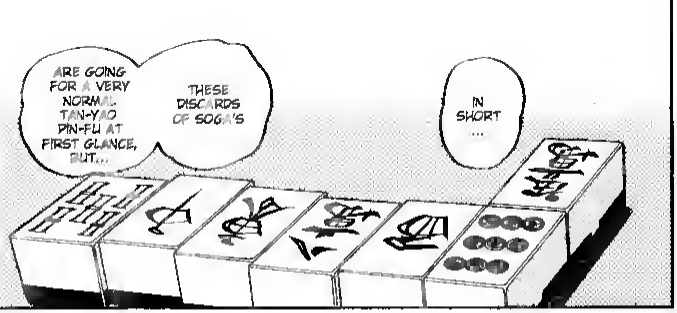
WE WERE TOO INTENT ON IT
WAS ONLY THERE TO BLIND US.
HARADA'S SAN-SHOKU
I SEE
THE CLEAR MAHJONG YAKU, "SAN-SHOKU" ...
FROM THE START

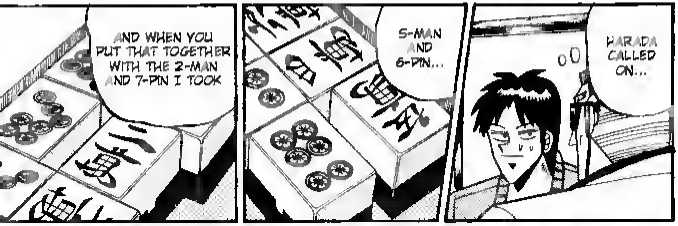
YOU WOULDN'T ACT LIKE THAT...
GENERALLY, IF IT WAS REALLY SAN-SHOKU
A BLUFF
WITHOUT A DOUBT
THAT SAN-SHOKU IS
WE DIDN'T NEED TO WATCH OUT FOR THAT SO MUCH
THERE'S NO WAY
HE'D PLAY LIKE THAT...
IF HE WAS REALLY AFTER SAN-SHOKU
AND AFTER THAT SOGA DIDN'T DEAL IN AND HE WASN'T GIVEN ANY SUPPORT EITHER
HE REVEALED TWO GROUPS
NOT HARADA, WHERE HIS TWO OPEN GROUPS SHOW A HIGH PROBABILITY OF HAVING SAN-SHOKU
IN SHORT ...
TEN MUST'VE REALIZED THAT A LONG TIME AGO.
BUT WHEN IT CAME DOWN TO THE CRUNCH
OF THE 5-SOU THAT HE DIN'T WANT TO DISCARD
FROM THE LINGERING HINT
HE FINALLY HAD TO DISCARD
THE REAL THING TO WATCH OUT FOR NOW IS
HE'S NOT IN A HURRY TO WIN.

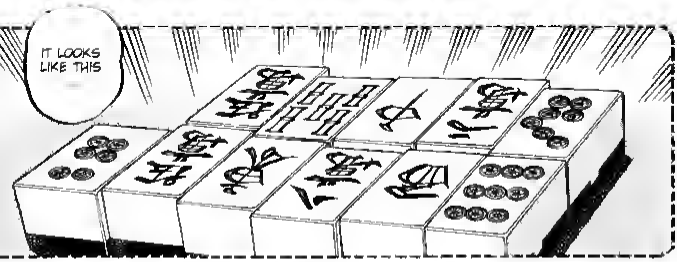
SOGA
MITSUI
.....!

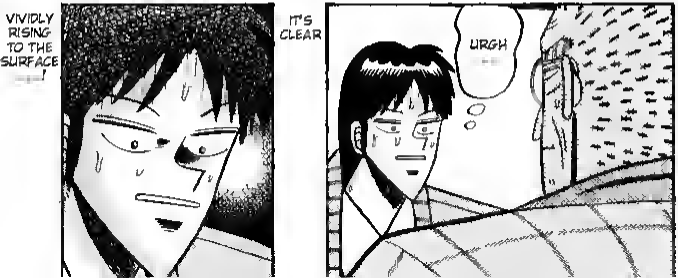
HE'S IN TENPAI.....
MAYBE WITH THAT 5-SOU
SOGA
...
WEST'S TRUE LINE OF ATTACK IS


IT WORKED, KILLING TWO BIRDS WITH ONE STONE...
ARE TO ERASE THE TRACE OF SOGA'S HAND FROM HIS DISCARDED TILES.
THE TILE HE PICKED UP FROM SOGA'S DISCARDS
A BLUFF.
HARADA'S SAN-SHOKU IS A TACTIC TO BLIND EAST'S EYES WITH THE SUN.....

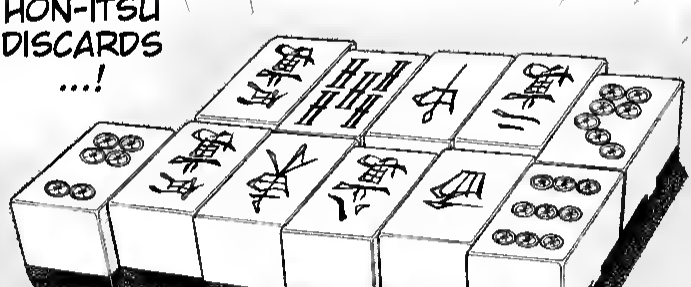

ARE GOING FOR A VERY NORMAL TAN-YAO PIN-FU AT FIRST GLANCE, BUT...
THESE DISCARDS OF SOGA'S
IN SHORT ...


AND WHEN YOU PUT THAT TOGETHER WITH THE 2-MAN AND 7-PIN I TOOK
5-MAN AND 6-PIN...
HARADA CALLED ON...


IT LOOKS LIKE THIS

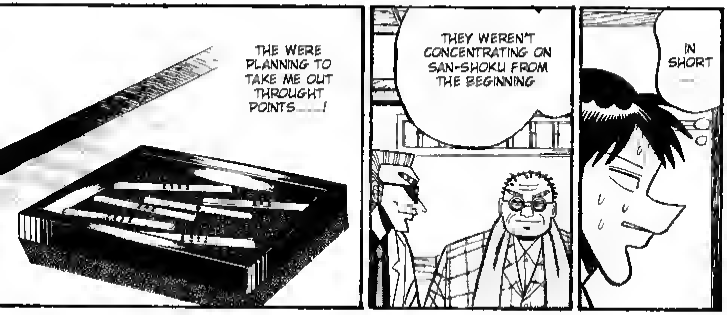

VIVIDLY RISING TO THE SURFACE!
IT'S CLEAR
URGH

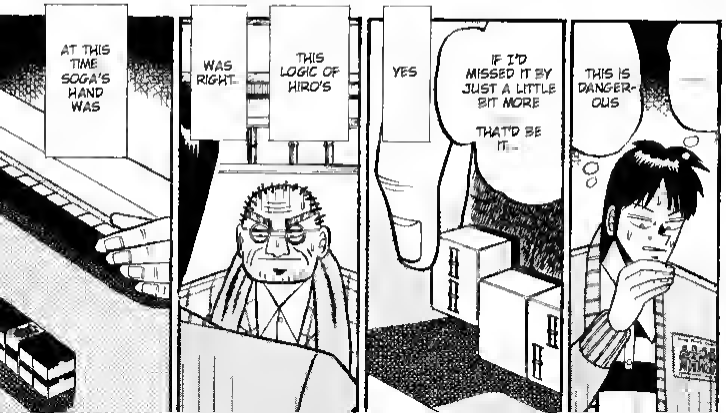
TYPICAL HON-ITSU DISCARDS ...!

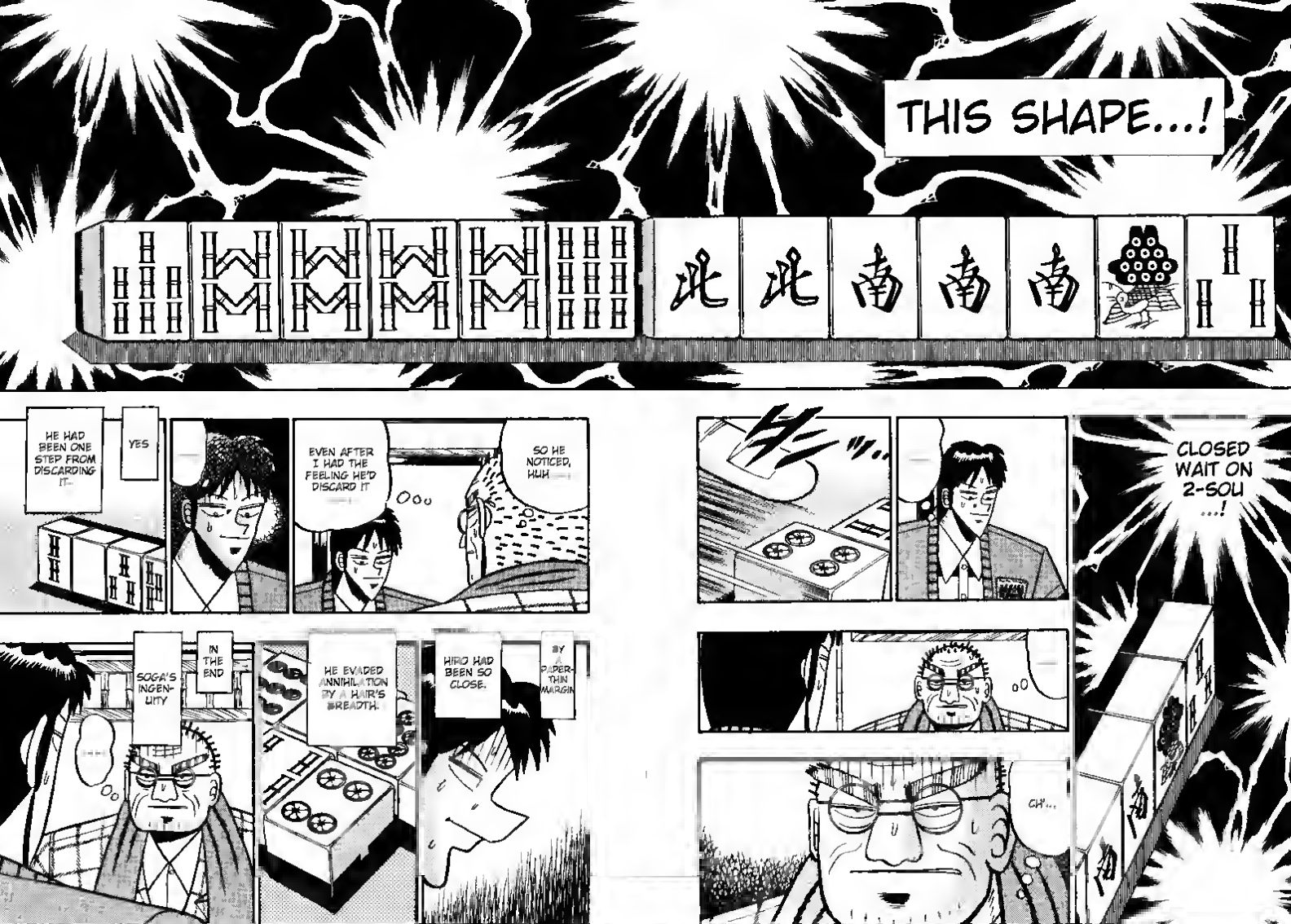


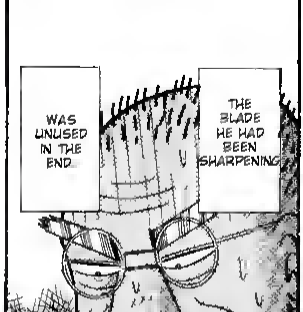
KNOWING THAT I WOULD EVENTUALLY TURN TOWARDS SUPPORTING TEN AND HIS CHANTA
AIMING FOR MY SUPPORT...
THEY'RE AIMING FOR ME
THEY PULLED OUT THE WORST OF THE REVEALING TILES DISGUISING THE DISCARD POOL
WHAT A PLAN TO COME UP WITH...

DOUBLE NAN, HON-ITSU, 1 DORA. HANEMAN.
WITH MY ITBOO, I'D GO BELOW ZERO.
IF I PLAYED IT... PERHAPS
THIS 2-SOU COULD BE A TILE HE'S AFTER
AND SINCE I CAN'T SEE ANY NAN ON THE TABLE
THE DORA IS A LOWER SOUZU!

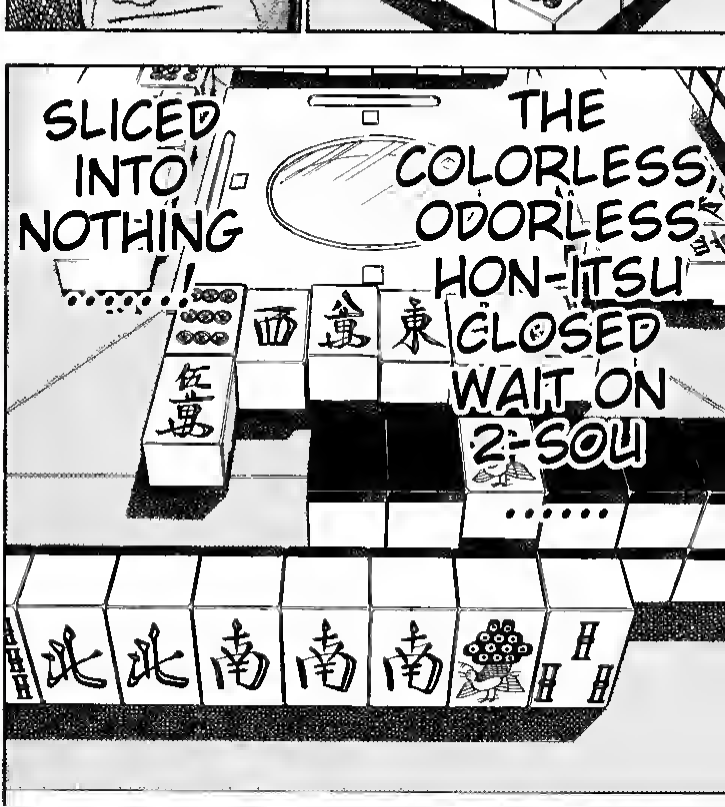

THE WERE PLANNING TO TAKE ME OUT THROUGHT POINTS...!
THEY WEREN'T CONCENTRATING ON SAN-SHOKU FROM THE BEGINNING
IN SHORT...


AT THIS TIME SOGA'S HAND WAS
WAS RIGHT.
THIS LOGIC OF HIRO'S
YES
IF I'D MISSED IT BY JUST A LITTLE BIT MORE
THAT'D BE IT...
THIS IS DANGER-OUS


THIS SHAPE...!
HE HAD BEEN ONE STEP FROM DISCARDING IT—
YES
EVEN AFTER I HAD THE FEELING HE'D DISCARD IT
SO HE NOTICED, HUH
IN THE END
SOGA'S INGENUITY
HE EVADED ANNIHILATION BY A HAIR'S BREADTH.
HIRO HAD BEEN SO CLOSE.
BY A PAPER-THIN MARGIN
CLOSED WAIT ON 2-SOU ...!
CH'...


WAS UNUSED IN THE END.
THE BLADE HE HAD BEEN SHARPENING

DEEP INSIDE THAT
THE IDEA OF SCATTERING TILES TO TAKE THE COLOR FROM HIS DISCARDS


SLICED INTO NOTHING.....!
THE COLORLESS ODORLESS HON-ITSU CLOSED WAIT ON 2-SOU
.....

天
CHAPTER 100
PAPER TIGER

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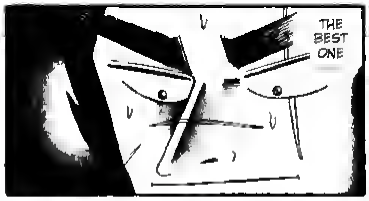
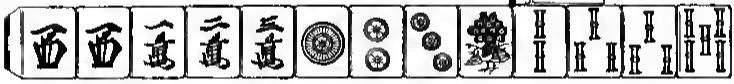
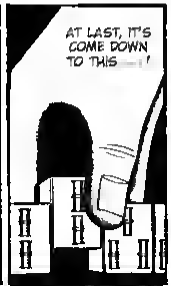
THE CLEAR MAHJONG BATTLE BETWEEN EAST AND WEST
IT HAD BEEN AVOIDED ...
AT ANY RATE
IT HAD BEEN CLOSE.
HE JUST STEPPED ASIDE, BUT
AN INCH BEFORE HIRO PLAYED INTO IT
WAS SILENTLY LURKING.
SOGA'S TRAP
UNDER THE SHADOW OF HARADA'S SAN-SHOKU
.....
WEST PUT UP AN EMPTY THREAT
RIGHT AFTER THAT, TEN
WAS AVOIDED BY EAST.
THIS SURPRISE ATTACK
A COLORLESS, ODORLESS HON-ITSU WITH A CLOSED WAIT ON 2-SOU.

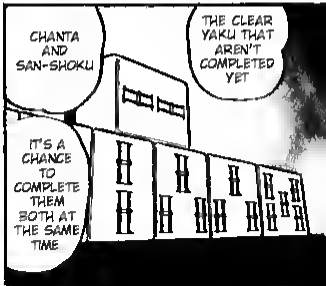
GOT IT
.....!


THE BEST ONE

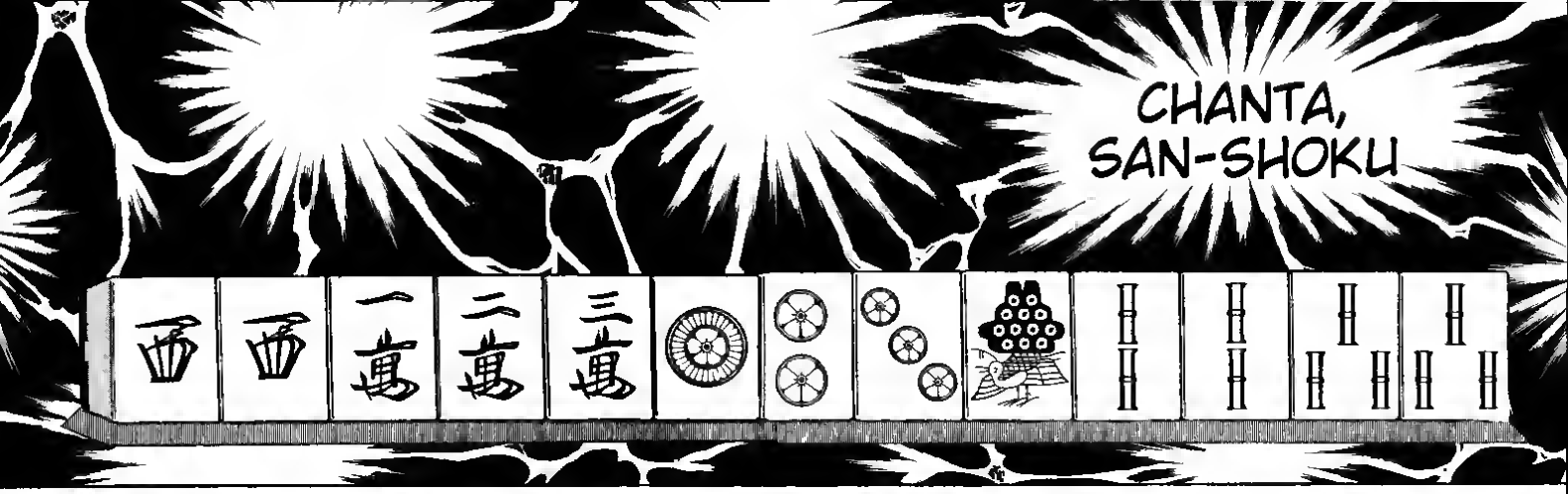


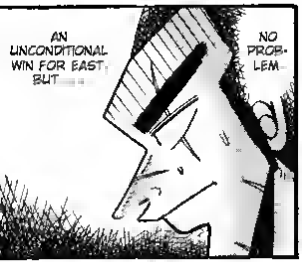
BUT

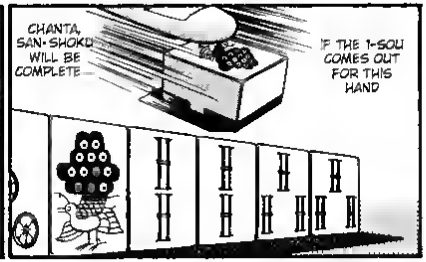

AT LAST, IT'S COME DOWN TO THIS....!


CHANTA AND SAN-SHOKU
IT'S A CHANCE TO COMPLETE THEM BOTH AT THE SAME TIME
THE CLEAR YAKU THAT AREN'T COMPLETED YET

HIRO WITH HIS 11300 WILL END UP BELOW ZERO
1-SOU OR EVEN 4-SOU
IF HE PLAYS
IT'S A DEALER MANGAN FOR 12000
I CAN'T EXPECT
WITH MY HAND IN THIS GOOD A SHAPE
HIRO TO DEAL IN ANYMORE
GO...!
IN THAT CASE
TSUMO ON MY OWN OR WAIT FOR WEST TO DEAL IN
ALL I CAN DO IS
RIICHI ...!

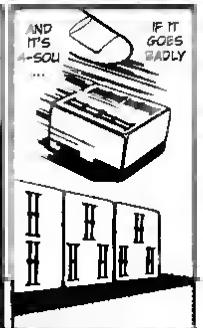

CHANTA, SAN-SHOKU


AN UNCONDITIONAL WIN FOR EAST, BUT...
NO PROB-LEM.


CHANTA, SAN-SHOKU WILL BE COMPLETE...
IF THE 1-SOU COMES OUT FOR THIS HAND

IT'S ALREADY UP TO 6 HAN.
BUT IF I DECLARE RIICHI
IT'S A HAND THAT CAN REACH HANEMAN

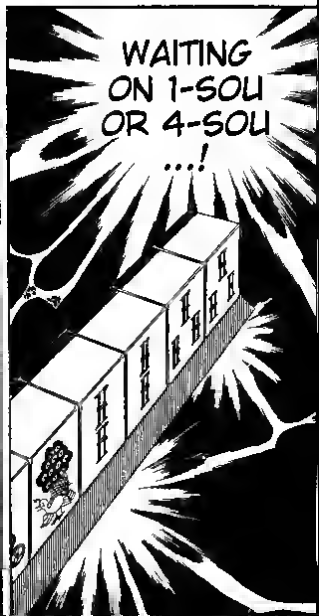
IT STOPS AT PIN-FU, SAN-SHOKU, 2 DORA, A DEALER MANGAN FOR 12000.
IF I DIDN'T DECLARE RIICHI


AND IT'S 4-SOU ...
IF IT GOES BADLY

URGH

THIS'LL DO...!

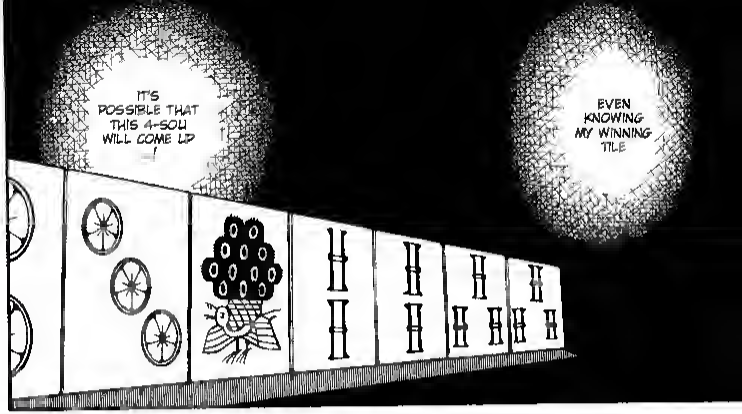
.....


WAITING ON 1-SOU OR 4-SOU ...!

A DEALER HANEMAN, 18000 POINTS .....!

WITHOUT CHANTA, I CAN TAKE OUT HARADA THROUGH POINTS...!
ENOUGH TO TAKE OUT HARADA AND HIS 16400 POINTS...!

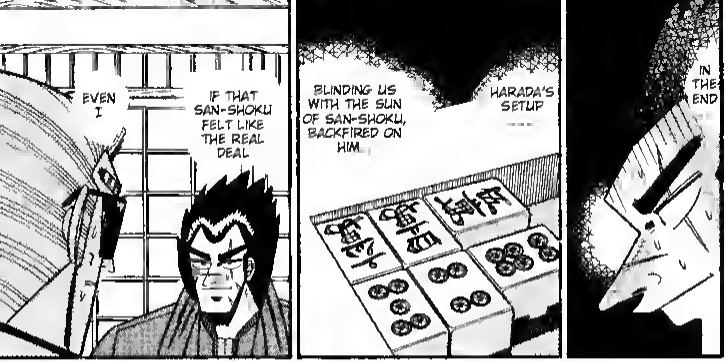
7 TILES IN HIS HAND
HE'S GOT TWO GROUPS OPEN...
RIGHT NOW...
AND EVEN THE CHEAPER 4-SOU ISN'T GOING TO COME OUT EASILY, BUT...
WELL... OF COURSE 1-SOU

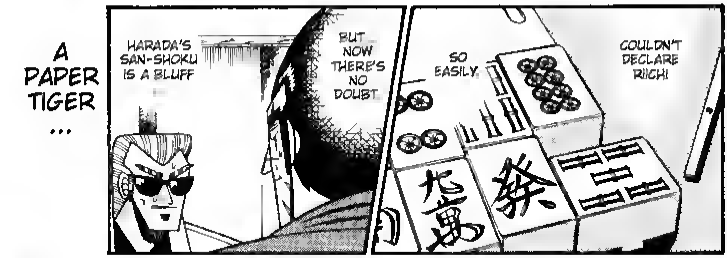

IT'S POSSIBLE THAT THIS 4-SOU WILL COME UP
EVEN KNOWING MY WINNING TILE

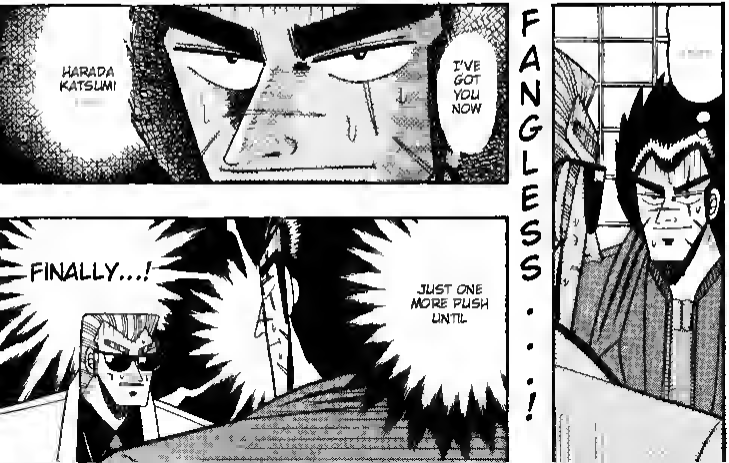
IT'S POSSIBLE FOR WEST'S DEFEAT TO BE SET.
IF HE PLAYED IN AND CHANTA SAN-SHOKU WAS COMPLETED
THE WORST THING WOULD BE TO PLAY AN END TILE.
FOR HARADA

HE COULD END UP PLAYING IT.....!
WHILE HASTILY FLEEING
RATHER THAN DISCARD AN END TILE
EVEN IF HE THINKS THAT THE 4-SOU COULD BE IT TOO...
THINKING ABOUT THAT DANGER

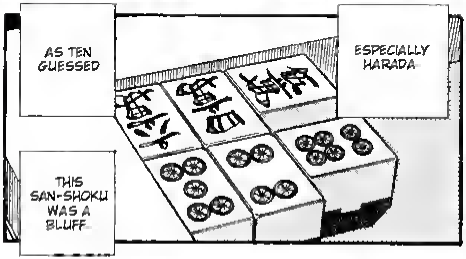
THAT THIS 4-SOU WILL FLOW OUT
IT'S POSSIBLE
WHEN IT GETS TOUGHER AND TOUGHER
BECAUSE HE HAS TO BE CAREFUL OF CHANTA
ONLY THIS
PREDICT THE GOOD WAIT I HAVE THAT MUCH
HE COULDN'T POSSIBLY
IN SHORT
IT WOULD COMPLETE TWO AT ONCE
IT IT'S THE RIGHT TILE
EVEN IF IT'S SAN-SHOKU CHANTA
IF HE IS
HE SHOULD BE ASSUMING A SHAPE LIKE THIS


EVEN I
IF THAT SAN-SHOKU FELT LIKE THE REAL DEAL
BLINDING US WITH THE SUN OF SAN-SHOKU, BACKFIRED ON HIM...
HARADA'S SETUP
IN THE END

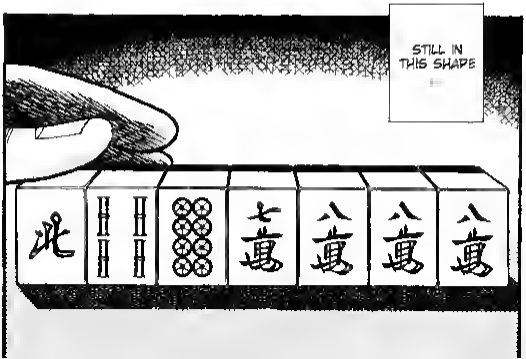

A PAPER TIGER ...
HARADA'S SAN-SHOKU IS A BLUFF
BUT NOW THERE'S NO DOUBT
SO EASILY
COULDN'T DECLARE RIICHI


HARADA KATSUMI
I'VE GOT YOU NOW
FANGLESS...!
FINALLY...!
JUST ONE MORE PUSH UNTIL

.....


AS TEN GUESSED
ESPECIALLY HARADA
THIS SAN-SHOKU WAS A BLUFF

WEST WAS STRUG-GLING
YES


STILL IN THIS SHAPE
THE SEVEN TILES IN HIS HAND WERE

6-SOU ...!
URGH
FOR HARADA, THIS DRAW CAME
TWO TURNS TOO LATE
THIS DRAW OF THE 6-SOU WAS TOO LATE
EVEN IF I'VE GOT IT NOW...
KH...

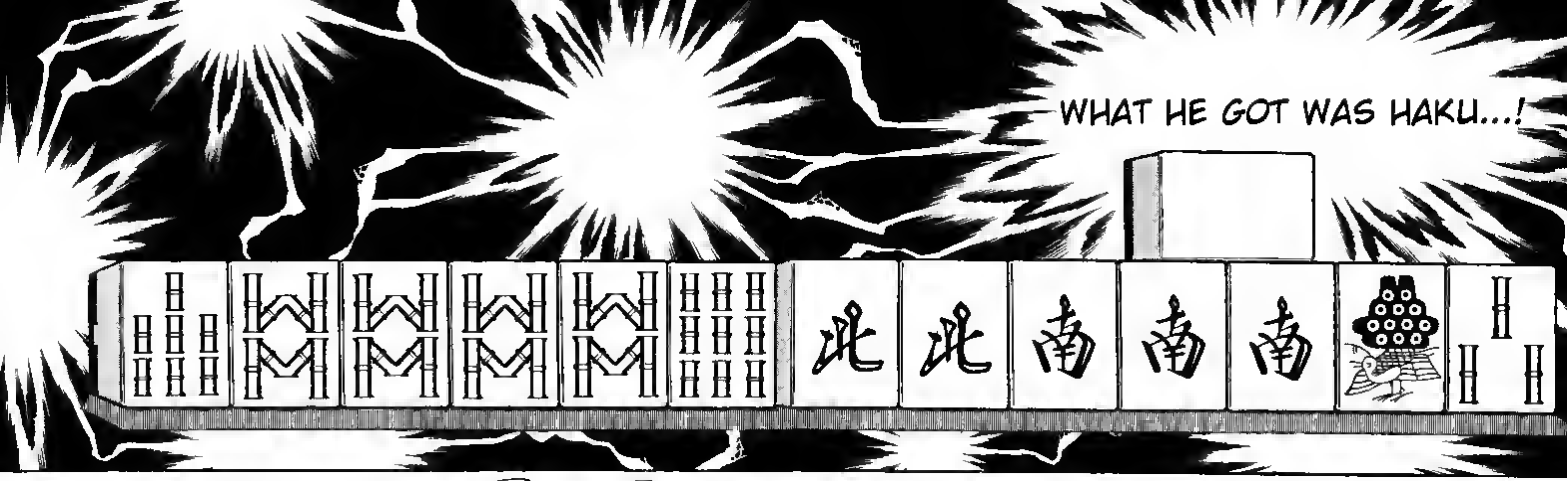
A READY HAND.
HE'D HAVE THIS.
AND CALLED ON SOGA'S 5-SOU
IF HE'D DRAWN IT TWO TURNS AGO

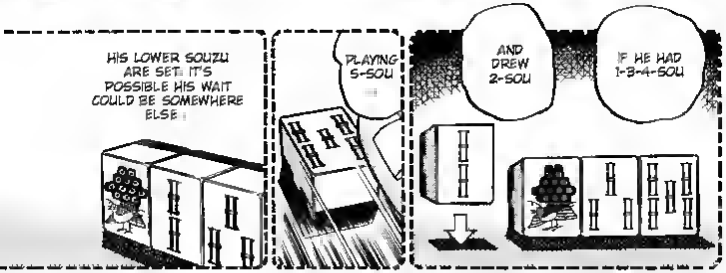
HARADA
RATHER THAN BEING CONFIDENT IN THIS DRAW OF 6-SOU
AS FAR AS THE PROGRESS HIS HAND WAS MAKING

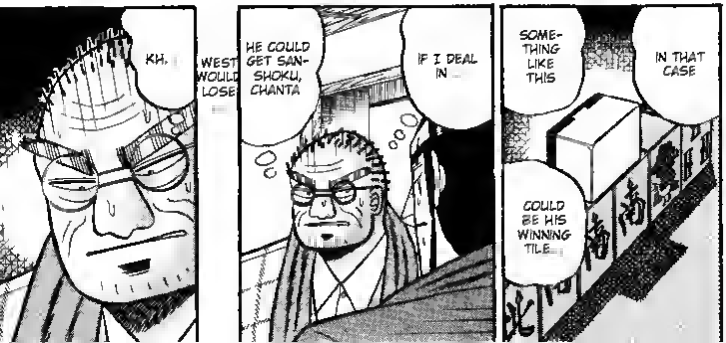
HE COULDN'T FOLLOW TEN AND GET AHEAD
WITH FLOW LIKE THIS
THE FLOW WAS BAD
WAS FALLING BEHIND, AND

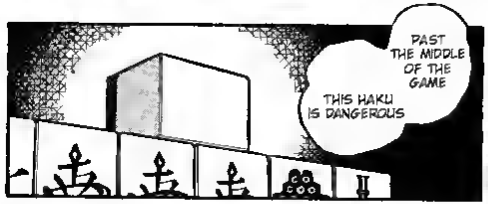
WHAT SOGA WAS THINKING
IS SURELY
THE CLEAR YAKU HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH IT
AS FAR AS TRYING TO BEAT EAST

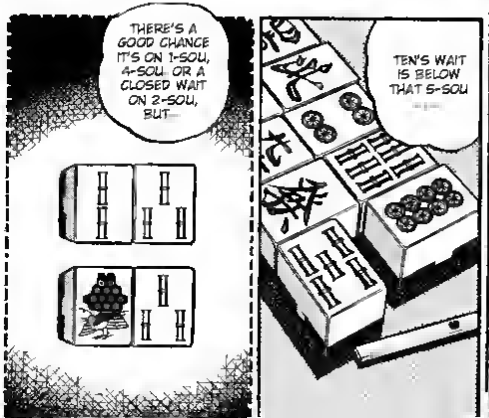
EVEN THOUGH SOGA HAD A CLOSED WAIT
HE WAS READY
北 北 南 南 西
IN SHORT, HE COULDN'T DEAL INTO SOGA'S HAND
BUT
HE COULDN'T PLAY IT
A TILE THAT COULD BE TEN'S WINNING TILE
HIS WAIT WAS 2-SOU
IT WAS JUST
BUT
NEXT TURN
AND THERE WOULDN'T BE A PROBLEM
SOGA JUST HAD TO DRAW IT
SOGA ALSO
GOT THE BACK-SIDE OF THE FLOW
URGH

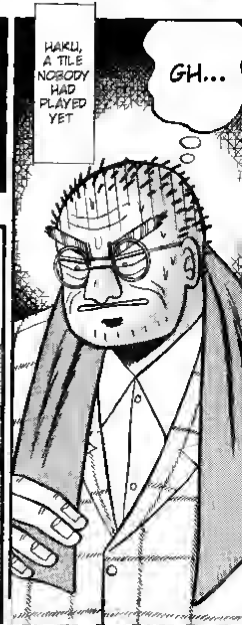

WHAT HE GOT WAS HAKU...!


HIS LOWER SOUZU ARE SET. IT'S POSSIBLE HIS WAIT COULD BE SOMEWHERE ELSE
PLAYING 5-SOU
AND DREW 2-SOU
IF HE HAD 1-3-4-SOU


KH.
WEST WOULD LOSE
HE COULD GET SAN-SHOKU, CHANTA
IF I DEAL IN
SOME-THING LIKE THIS
IN THAT CASE
COULD BE HIS WINNING TILE


PAST THE MIDDLE OF THE GAME
THIS HAKU IS DANGEROUS

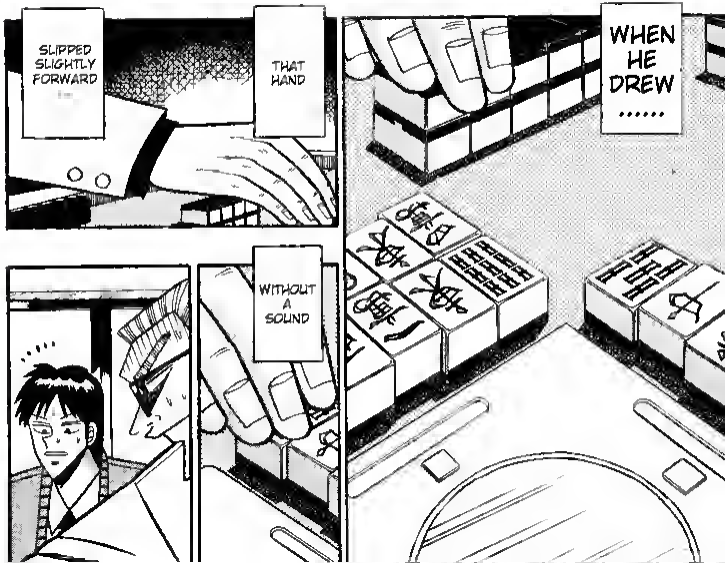

THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE IT'S ON 1-SOU, 4-SOU, OR A CLOSED WAIT ON 2-SOU, BUT...
TEN'S WAIT IS BELOW THAT 5-SOU

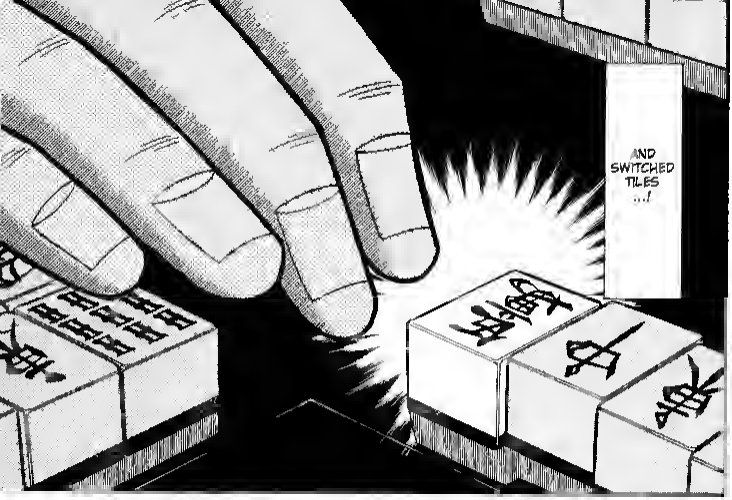

HAKU, A TILE NOBODY HAD PLAYED YET
GH...

SOGA FOLDS...
.....
WE DID IT...!
WHEN WEST'S MAIN LINE OF ATTACK
SOGA FOLDS THAT MEANS

IS EAST'S LAST STAND
NOW, THIS ROUND
THAT WEST'S CHANCES OF WINNING ARE GONE
THERE'S A 90% CHANCE
EAST'S FLOW KEPT GETTING BETTER
A MATTER OF TEN GETTING THE RIGHT DRAW.....!
IT'S JUST
WHAT HE WENT FOR HERE WAS
HARADA
DESP-ERATE
THE OMINOUS FEELING THAT THE MATCH WOULD BE SETTLED HUNG OVERHEAD
WEST WAS BACKED INTO A CORNER

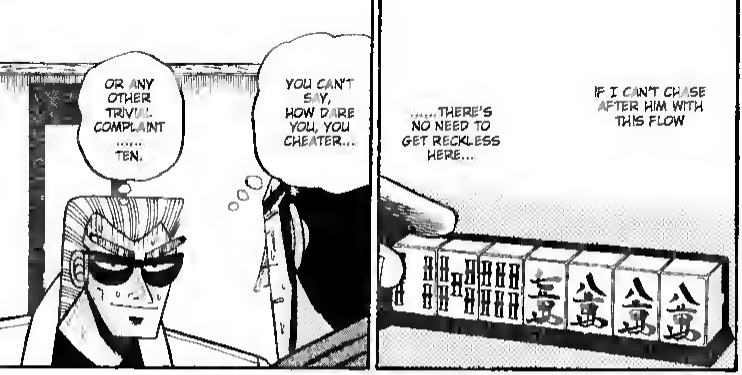
AN OUTRAGEOUS MOVE ...!

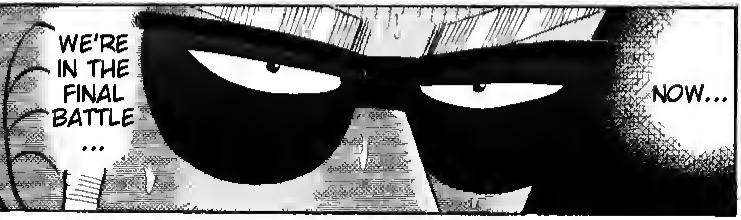

SLIPPED SLIGHTLY FORWARD
THAT HAND
WHEN HE DREW .....
WITHOUT A SOUND

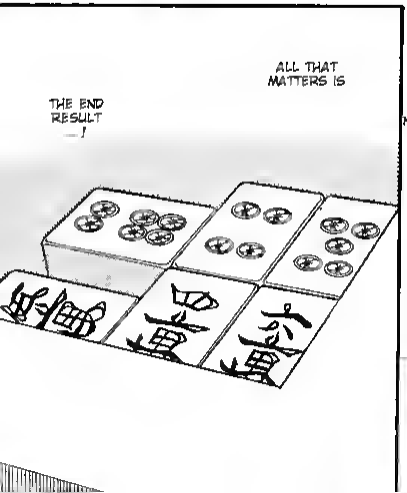

AND SWITCHED TILES ...!

URGH...!

GH...
WAS SWITCHED WITH THE S-MAN HE DREW
SOGA'S S-SOU
WE'VE BEEN HAD ...!
HEH HEH HEH...
THIS GUY...!

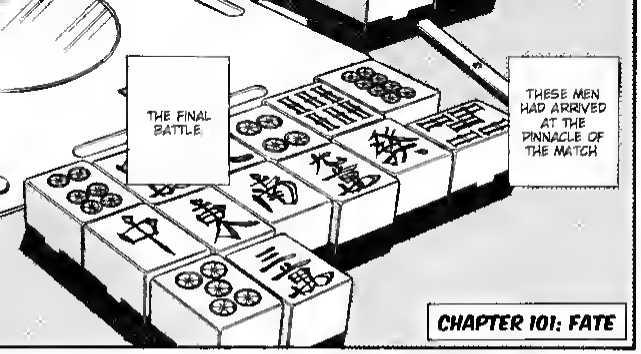

OR ANY OTHER TRIVIAL COMPLAINT ..... TEN.
YOU CAN'T SAY, HOW DARE YOU, YOU CHEATER...
.....THERE'S NO NEED TO GET RECKLESS HERE...
IF I CAN'T CHASE AFTER HIM WITH THIS FLOW


WE'RE IN THE FINAL BATTLE ...
NOW...

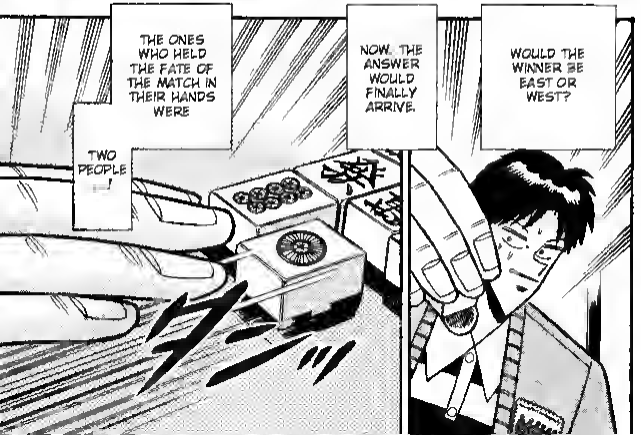

ALL THAT MATTERS IS
THE END RESULT —!

A FAIR FIGHT MEANS NOTHIN—
IF WE HAVE TO WIN ...
WE'LL USE ANY MEANS NECESSARY

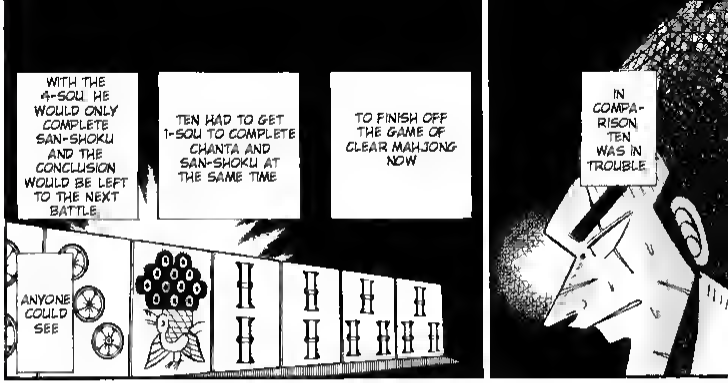
WIN ...!
HOW IT WAS DONE ISN'T UP FOR DEBATE ...!
WHEN IT GETS RESULTS
WITH THIS SAN-SHOKU
BY ANY MEANS
WIN ...!
KH...!
TO A FUCKER LIKE YOU...
AS IF I'D LOSE

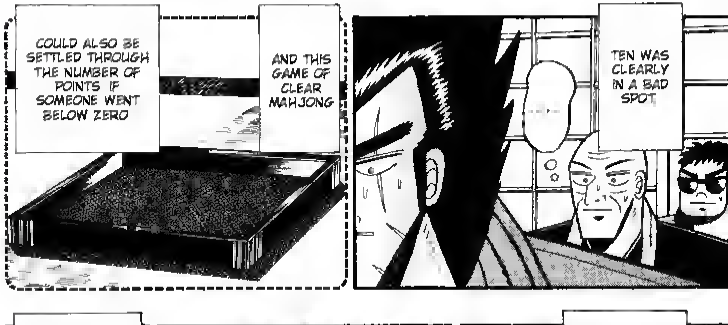


THE SHOWDOWN OF THE EAST-WEST BATTLE


THE ONES WHO HELD THE FATE OF THE MATCH IN THEIR HANDS WERE
TWO PEOPLE...!
NOW, THE ANSWER WOULD FINALLY ARRIVE.
WOULD THE WINNER BE EAST OR WEST?

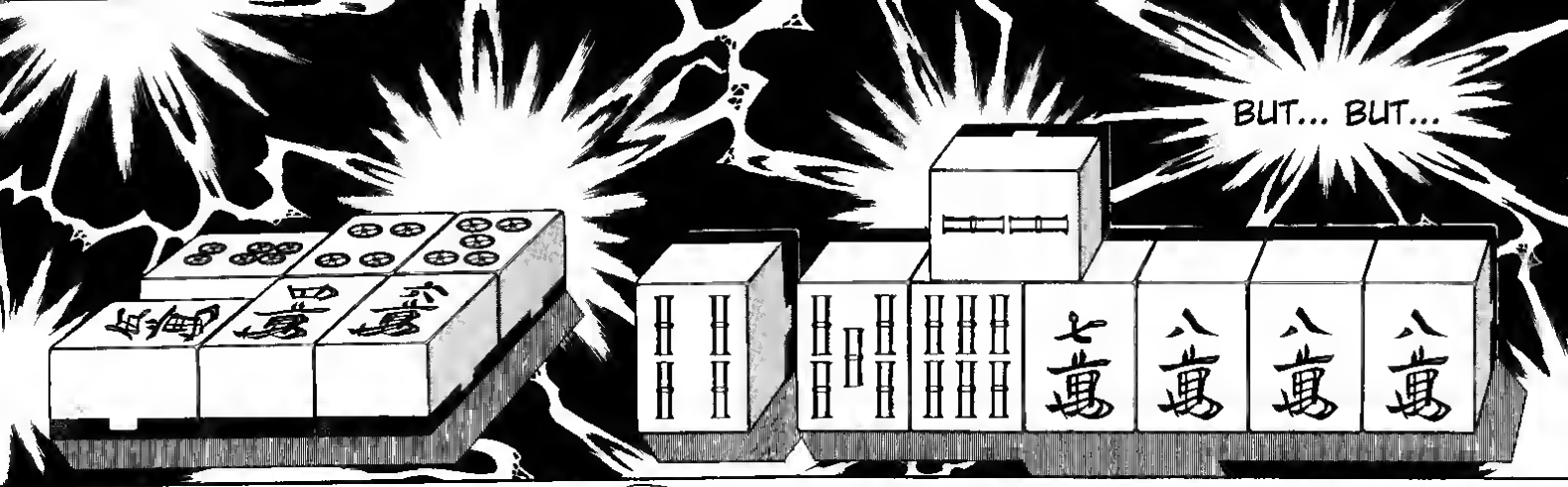
天
CHAPTER 101
FATE
ざわ…
ざわ…
DRAGON AND TIGER, EAST AND WEST
TEN AND HARADA
WHERE THE SAN-SHOKU HE NEEDED WAS ALREADY SET
ESPECIALLY FOR HARADA
EITHER ONE COMPLETING THEIR HAND WOULD MEAN VICTORY
BOTH SIDES HAD READY HANDS FOR THE REMAINING YAKU IN CLEAR MAHJONG
WHETHER HE GOT 6-MAN, 9-MAN, OR 7-MAN, ANY OF THEM WOULD COMPLETE THE CLEAR YAKU WITHOUT A PROBLEM.
AND HE HAD A THREE-SIDED WAIT
七萬 八萬 八萬 八萬
TEN AND HIS CHANTA SAN-SHOKU?
WHICH OF THESE TWO WOULD COMPLETE THE GAME OF CLEAR MAHJONG?
HARADA AND HIS OPEN SAN-SHOKU?

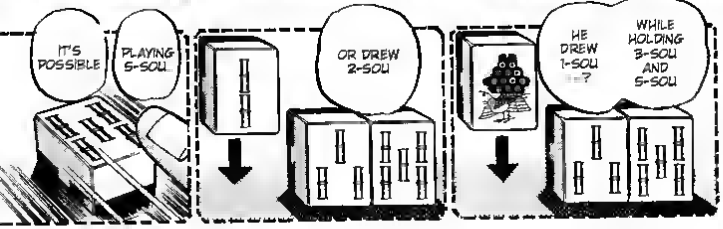

WITH THE 4-SOU HE WOULD ONLY COMPLETE SAN-SHOKU AND THE CONCLUSION WOULD BE LEFT TO THE NEXT BATTLE
TEN HAD TO GET 1-SOU TO COMPLETE CHANTA AND SAN-SHOKU AT THE SAME TIME
TO FINISH OFF THE GAME OF CLEAR MAHJONG NOW
IN COMPARISON, TEN WAS IN TROUBLE
ANYONE COULD SEE

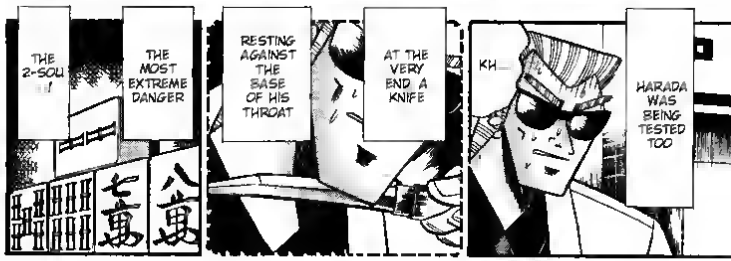

COULD ALSO BE SETTLED THROUGH THE NUMBER OF POINTS IF SOMEONE WENT BELOW ZERO
AND THIS GAME OF CLEAR MAHJONG
TEN WAS CLEARLY IN A BAD SPOT

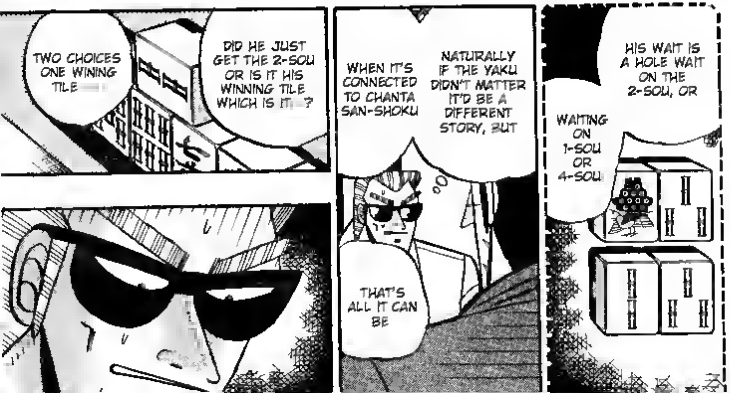
SINCE IT WOULDN'T BE SO EASY TO BRING ANYONE BELOW ZERO, WOULD THAT ITEM ON THE AGENDA BE PUT ASIDE —?
11300
PRESENTLY, THE POINTS OF THESE FOUR PEOPLE WERE LIKE SO
36700
16400
35600

NOW, THE CONCLUSION OF THE TANGLED NET OF THIS MATCH
WAS CLOSING IN ON THEM
IN SHORT, WHICH ONE WOULD COMPLETE THE CLEAR YAKU FIRST
WOULD IT BE SAN-SHOKU OR SAN-SHOKU CHANTA?
MORE IMPORTANTLY AT THIS POINT IN TIME WAS THE QUESTION
WITH THE POSITION OF THREE OF THEM KNOWN, THERE IS ONLY ONE LEFT.
THIS 1-SOU
TEN HAD TO GET 1-SOU TO COMPLETE SAN-SHOKU AND CHANTA AT THE SAME TIME.
TO GET A HANDLE ON CLEAR MAHJONG
AT THIS POINT IN TIME, WEST WAS IN A SUPERIOR POSITION
WHICH MEANT
IF HE DRAWS ONE, HE WINS...!
ANY ONE OF THOSE EIGHT WOULD BE ENOUGH.
WEST WAS IN AN OVERWHELMINGLY SUPERIOR POSITION.
RIGHT NOW, HARADA
ON THE OTHER HAND, HARADA HAS A THREE-SIDED WAIT ON ANY OF THESE EIGHT TILES THAT ARE LEFT.
IS WHAT HE HAS TO GET.

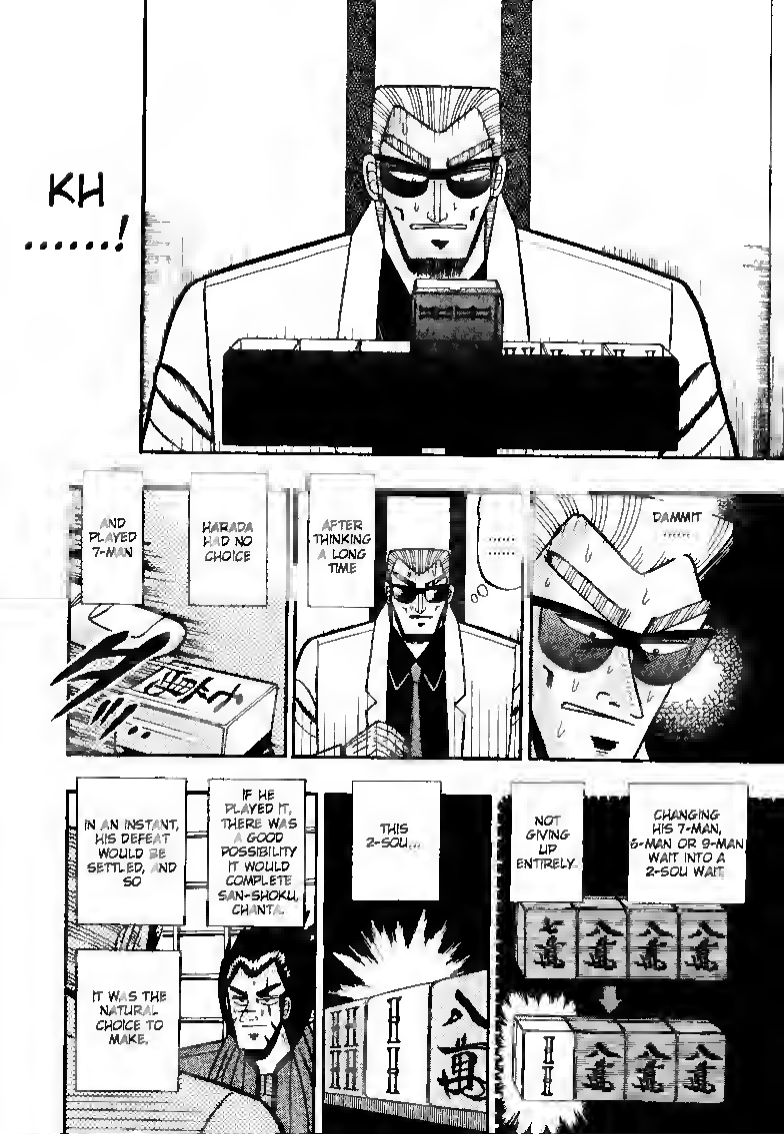

BUT... BUT...

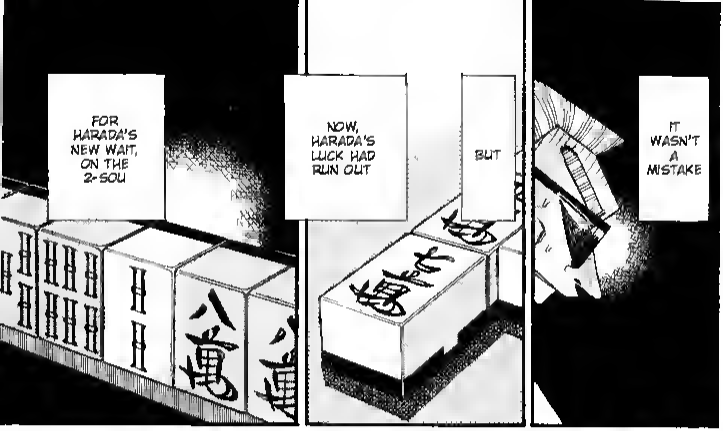

IT'S POSSIBLE
PLAYING 5-SOU
OR DREW 2-SOU
HE DREW 1-SOU ...?
WHILE HOLDING 3-SOU AND 5-SOU

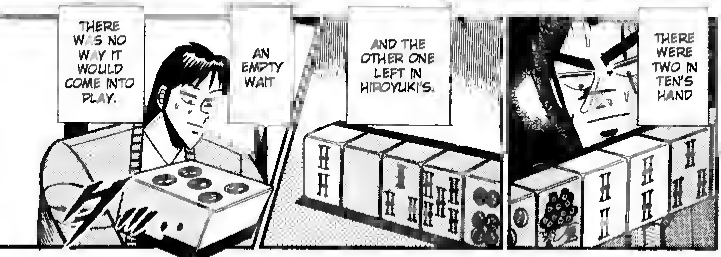

THE 2-SOU ...!
THE MOST EXTREME DANGER
RESTING AGAINST THE BASE OF HIS THROAT
AT THE VERY END A KNIFE
KH...
HARADA WAS BEING TESTED TOO


TWO CHOICES ONE WINING TILE
DID HE JUST GET THE 2-SOU OR IS IT HIS WINNING TILE WHICH IS IT...?
WHEN IT'S CONNECTED TO CHANTA SAN-SHOKU
NATURALLY IF THE YAKU DIDN'T MATTER IT'D BE A DIFFERENT STORY, BUT
THAT'S ALL IT CAN BE
HIS WAIT IS A HOLE WAIT ON THE 2-SOU, OR
WAITING ON 1-SOU OR 4-SOU!

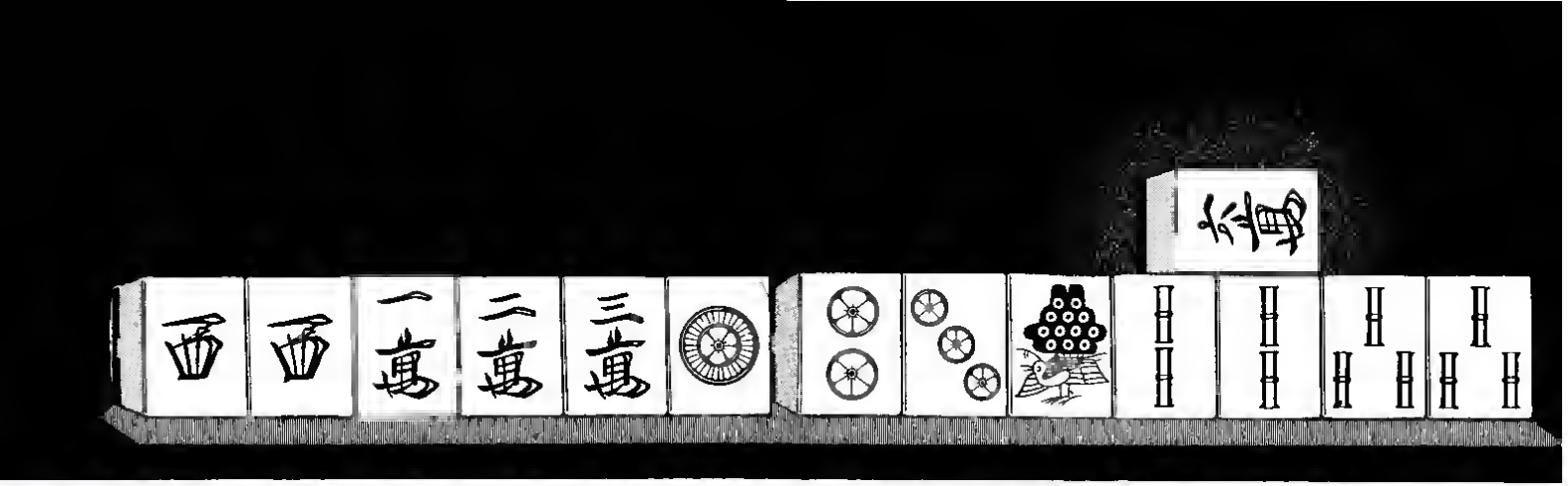
TO DECLARE RIICHI WITH
THE 5-SOU HE PULLED FROM HIS HAND
MEANS IT'S ON THE LOWER END
WHICH MEANS ...
TEN'S SAN-SHOKU ISN'T IN THE UPPER END
BECAUSE SOGA IS HOLDING FOUR OF THE 8-SOU


KH
.....!
AND PLAYED 7-MAN
HARADA HAD NO CHOICE
AFTER THINKING A LONG TIME
.....
.....
DAMMIT
.....
IN AN INSTANT, HIS DEFEAT WOULD BE SETTLED, AND SO
IF HE PLAYED IT, THERE WAS A GOOD POSSIBILITY IT WOULD COMPLETE SAN-SHOKU CHANTA.
IT WAS THE NATURAL CHOICE TO MAKE.
THIS 2-SOU...
NOT GIVING UP ENTIRELY.
CHANGING HIS 7-MAN, 6-MAN OR 9-MAN WAIT INTO A 2-SOU WAIT.


FOR HARADA'S NEW WAIT, ON THE 2-SOU
NOW, HARADA'S LUCK HAD RUN OUT
BUT
IT WASN'T A MISTAKE

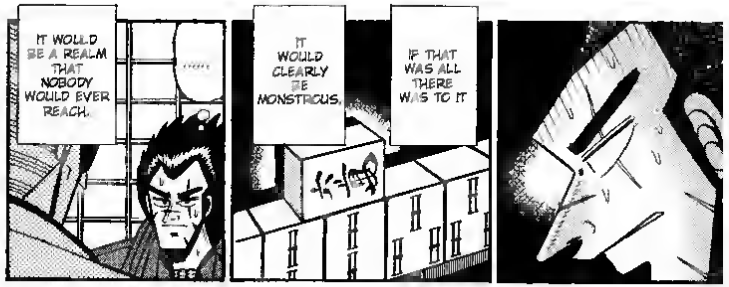

THERE WAS NO WAY IT WOULD COME INTO PLAY.
AN EMPTY WAIT
AND THE OTHER ONE LEFT IN HIROYUKI'S.
THERE WERE TWO IN TEN'S HAND

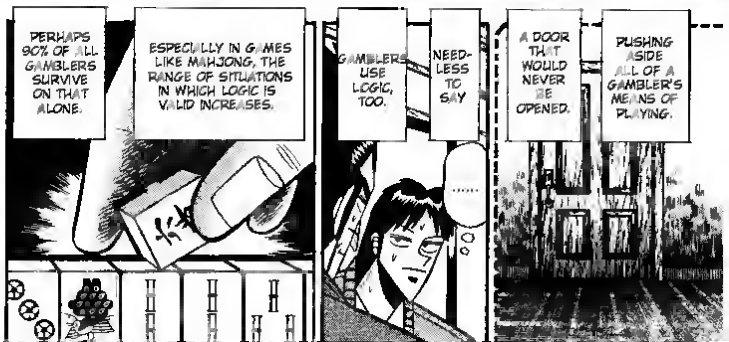
HOW SHOULD THESE UNREASONABLE THINGS BE EXPLAINED .....?
THE ILLOGICAL MOVES OF GAMBLERS
HIS DEFEAT WAS SET.
THROUGH THIS FLAWLESS LOGIC

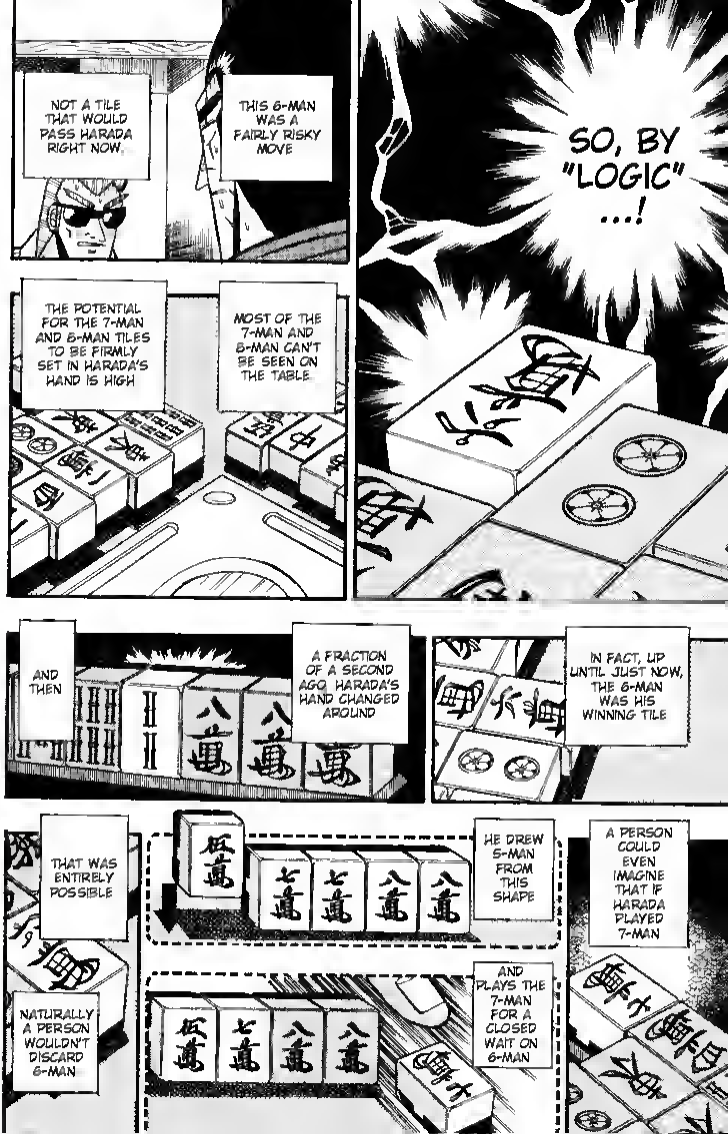


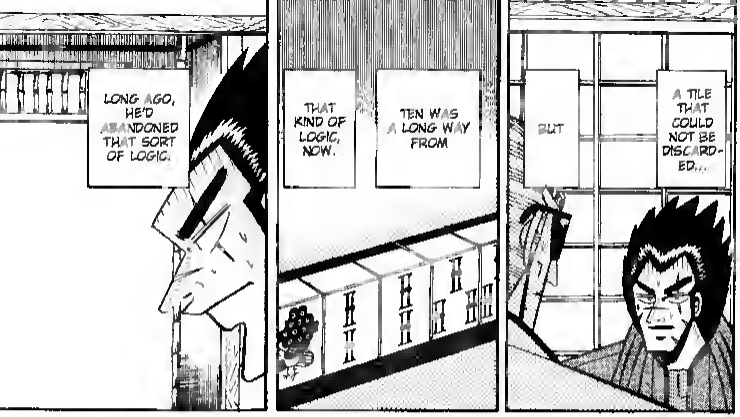
IN THE END
WHEN THAT COMES UP
IT WILL HAVE TO BE OVER-COME.
LOGIC DOESN'T FILL IN THAT GAP.
THAT WON'T BRIDGE THE GAP, NO MATTER WHAT THEY DO.
FOR THE 10% LEFT
BUT... BUT

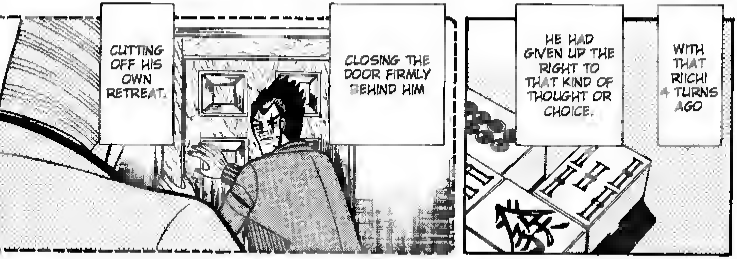
GH...!
WISDOM...


IT WOULD BE A REALM THAT NOBODY WOULD EVER REACH.
IT WOULD CLEARLY BE MONSTROUS.
IF THAT WAS ALL THERE WAS TO IT


PERHAPS 90% OF ALL GAMBLERS SURVIVE ON THAT ALONE.
ESPECIALLY IN GAMES LIKE MAHJONG, THE RANGE OF SITUATIONS IN WHICH LOGIC IS VALID INCREASES.
GAMBLERS USE LOGIC, TOO.
NEED-LESS TO SAY
A DOOR THAT WOULD NEVER BE OPENED.
PUSHING ASIDE ALL OF A GAMBLER'S MEANS OF PLAYING.

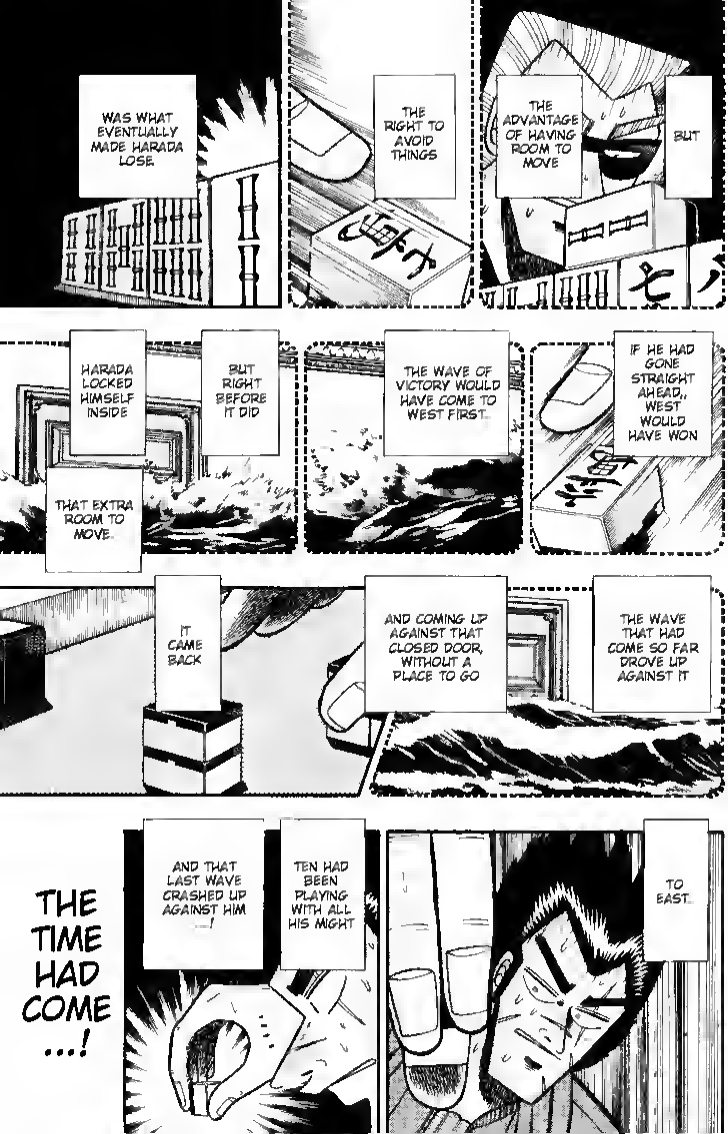

NOT A TILE THAT WOULD PASS HARADA RIGHT NOW.
THIS 6-MAN WAS A FAIRLY RISKY MOVE
SO, BY "LOGIC" ...!
THE POTENTIAL FOR THE 7-MAN AND 6-MAN TILES TO BE FIRMLY SET IN HARADA'S HAND IS HIGH
MOST OF THE 7-MAN AND 6-MAN CAN'T BE SEEN ON THE TABLE
AND THEN
A FRACTION OF A SECOND AGO, HARADA'S HAND CHANGED AROUND
IN FACT, UP UNTIL JUST NOW, THE 6-MAN WAS HIS WINNING TILE
THAT WAS ENTIRELY POSSIBLE
HE DREW 5-MAN FROM THIS SHAPE
A PERSON COULD EVEN IMAGINE THAT IF HARADA PLAYED 7-MAN
NATURALLY A PERSON WOULDN'T DISCARD 6-MAN
AND PLAYS THE 7-MAN FOR A CLOSED WAIT ON 6-MAN

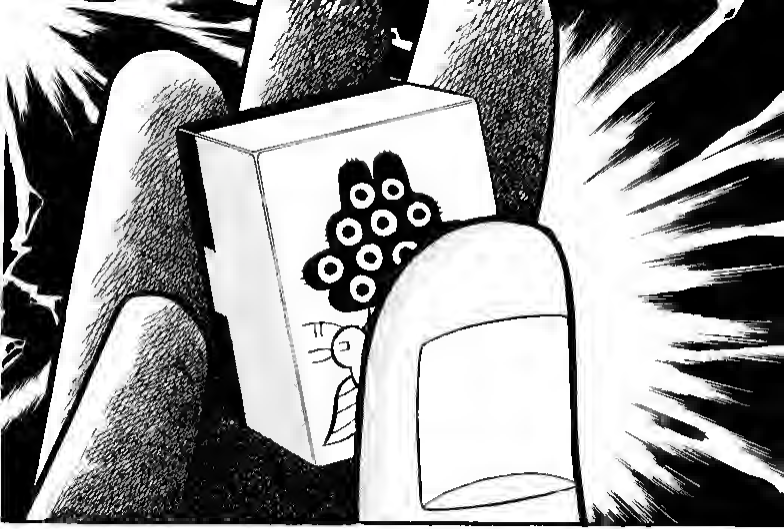

LONG AGO, HE'D ABANDONED THAT SORT OF LOGIC.
THAT KIND OF LOGIC, NOW.
TEN WAS A LONG WAY FROM
BUT
A TILE THAT COULD NOT BE DISCARDED...

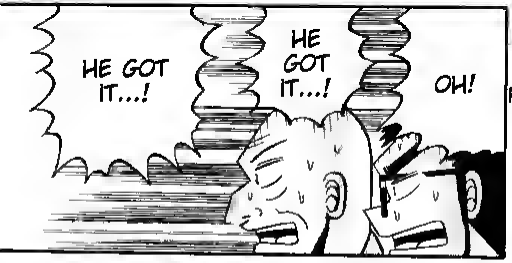

CUTTING OFF HIS OWN RETREAT.
CLOSING THE DOOR FIRMLY BEHIND HIM
HE HAD GIVEN UP THE RIGHT TO THAT KIND OF THOUGHT OR CHOICE.
WITH THAT RICHI 4 TURNS AGO

UPON FEELING THAT...
HE WOULD LOSE THAT IMPORTANT "SOMETHING" THAT WOULD SETTLE THE MATCH.
IF HE MOVED OUT OF THE WAY, THAT DANGEROUS BALANCE WITH HARADA WOULD BE BROKEN.
HE SIMPLY ACTED ACCORDINGLY

A DIRECT LOGIC ...!
ONLY A DIRECT LOGIC THAT FELL STRAIGHT THROUGH TO HIS HEART...
IT WANS'T PASSIVE LOGIC THAT GUIDED HIS THOUGHTS.
ONLY COMES TO THOSE WHO KEEP FACING A BLADE AIMED AT THEIR HEART.
THAT HUNCH
IN A FLASH
A HEART THAT CLUNG TO WISDOM AND LOGIC
AND AT THE SAME TIME, IT SLIPPED FROM HIS HANDS...
TEN OFFERED HIMSELF UP TO THAT
YOU COULD SAY THAT HE WAS WISE UNTIL THE END
DIDN'T LET GO OF HIS LOGIC THROUGH TO THE END
ON THE OTHER HAND HARADA
HE COULD AVOID DANGEROUS TILES TOO
AND THEN AT LAST
HE HAD ROOM TO MOVE
THERE WERE PLENTY OF HIS TILES LEFT, TOO.
HE HAD A MULTI-SIDED WAIT.
CERTAINLY, BY LOGIC, HARADA SHOULD HAVE WON.


WAS WHAT EVENTUALLY MADE HARADA LOSE.
THE RIGHT TO AVOID THINGS
THE ADVANTAGE OF HAVING ROOM TO MOVE
BUT
HARADA LOCKED HIMSELF INSIDE
BUT RIGHT BEFORE IT DID
THAT EXTRA ROOM TO MOVE..
THE WAVE OF VICTORY WOULD HAVE COME TO WEST FIRST..
IF HE HAD GONE STRAIGHT AHEAD,, WEST WOULD HAVE WON
IT CAME BACK
AND COMING UP AGAINST THAT CLOSED DOOR, WITHOUT A PLACE TO GO
THE WAVE THAT HAD COME SO FAR DROVE UP AGAINST IT
THE TIME HAD COME ...!
AND THAT LAST WAVE CRASHED UP AGAINST HIM ...!
TEN HAD BEEN PLAYING WITH ALL HIS MIGHT
TO EAST..




HE GOT IT...!
HE GOT IT...!
OH!

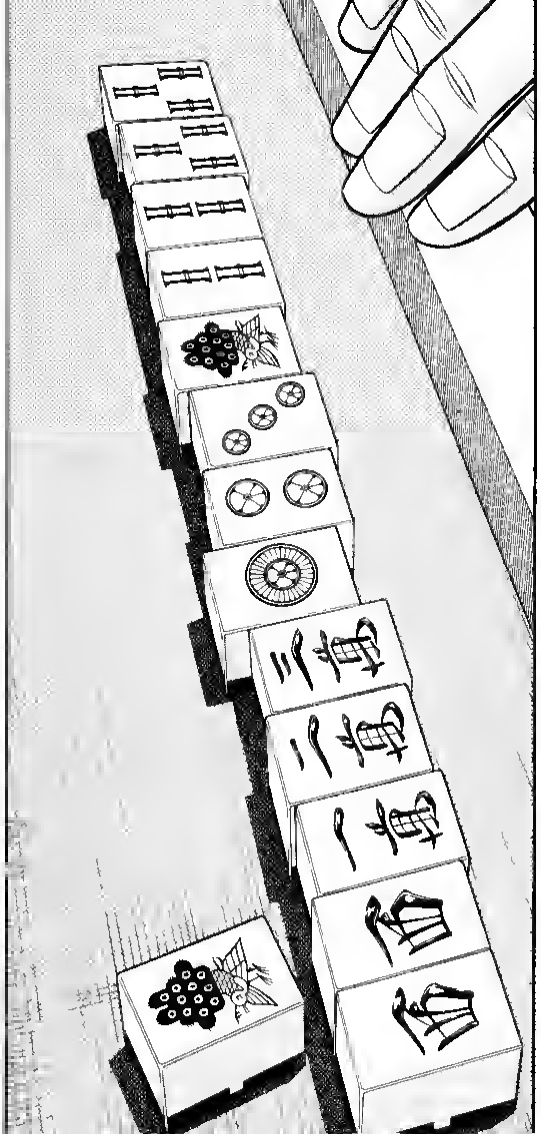
DID HE...

HUH ...?

THE TIME TO FINISH IT ...!
URGH ...!

THE LONG PUZZLE OF CLEAR MAHJONG
IT WAS THE FINAL PIECE THAT COMPLETED
ONLY 1-SOU WOULD FILL THAT GAP
2-SOU OR 3-SOU WOULDN'T DO
BRINGING HIM BACK FROM DEFEAT...!
THAT TEN'S FATE PULLED IN
THAT GAP

CHANTA SANSHOKU...!
EAST... COMPLETED CLEAR MAHJONG .....!
GH...!


THE FINAL PIECE ...!

URRGH ...
ガヲッ
TEN ...!
NOT YET...
.....
WE WON ...!
YOU DID IT.
YOU DID IT ...!
WE WON AGAINST WEST ...!
THEY'RE WAVERING
OUR FATES STILL AREN'T SETTLED.
WE STILL DON'T KNOW

HUH ...?
ざわ
ざわ
ざわ
IT'S TOTALLY OBVIOUS .....
WHAT'S HE TRYING TO SAY THIS TIME?
THAT'S CRAZY

IT'S CLEARLY CHANTA SAN-SHOKU WITHOUT A DOUBT
SO WHAT THE HELL IS HARADA...
AH...!
THAT'S IT...!
WE STILL DON'T KNOW
THIS CHANTA SAN-SHOKU...
Young Horn

THE FINAL CONCLUSION ISN'T SETTLED YET...
WE DON'T KNOW THE FINAL CONCLUSION
BUT LIKE HARADA SAID
THAT ITSELF IS SET, SURE
STILL WAVERING.....!
UNCERTAIN...